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THE BIBLE AND RATIONALISM OR

ANSWER TO DIFFICULTIES IN THE
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AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT

BY
REV. JOHN THEIN

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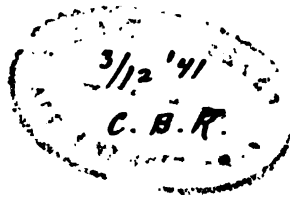
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THE BIBLE AND RATIONALISM OR
ANSWER TO DIFFICULTIES
IN THE HISTORICAL, DIDACTIC, SAPIENTIAL
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By REV. JOHN THEIN

*Author of "Christian Anthropology," "Answer to
Difficulties of the Bible,"* "Catechism of Roder,"
and "Ecclesiastical Dictionary." : : : : :*



** The present work, under a different title, forms Part Second of a new edition
of "Answer to Difficulties of the Bible," completely revised and greatly enlarged.*

PART II.

THE WORK WILL COMPRISE FOUR VOLUMES; EACH VOLUME
FORMS A WHOLE BY ITSELF AND SELLS SEPARATELY. . . .

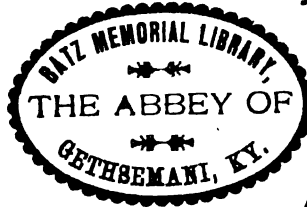
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THE HISTORICAL BOOKS:—JOSUE UNTIL THE MACHABEES

CHAPTER I

THE BOOK OF JOSUE

I. ANTIQUITY OF THE BOOK OF JOSUE.—The Book of Josue shares the fate of the Pentateuch in the eyes of infidel criticism. It condemns both, as unworthy of belief. The former work does not merit more confidence than the latter, we are told, because it is only a part of the whole, a member of the same body. The term Pentateuch is incorrect: Hexateuch, we should say. For the work placed at the head of our Bible is not composed of five books, but of six, and the Book of Josue forms the sixth. It is of the same age as the Pentateuch, and was compiled in its present form, with assistance from the same sources, by the same writer.

At first, Rationalists claimed that the Book of Josue consisted of at least twelve different fragments. But the fragmentary hypothesis, having been weighed and found wanting, was abandoned for a new theory: that of the complimentary hypothesis. They pretended that the pieces designated by the name of Elohist, in the Pentateuch and in Josue, had belonged primitively to one writing, which embraced the whole time elapsing from the beginning of the world, not only to the death of Moses, but to that of Josue. A few critics adopted the basis of this opinion. Thus arose the idea of the Hexateuch. Other Rationalists agree neither with these, nor among themselves, in regard to numerous points of detail. They maintain, however, to-day, the existence of the Hexateuch. The Book of Josue presupposes that the Pentateuch is the work of Moses; now it is just this that infidels are unwilling to admit on any consideration. Hence, it is especially the desire to deny the supernatural which makes them reject both the antiquity and authenticity of the Book of Josue. We need

not defend here the supernatural, but we have to answer the special objections which we have just noted.

Although the Greeks "invented the title of Pentateuch," as Reuss says, it is probable that they did not invent the division of the work into five books, and that this arrangement is more ancient than the translation of the Septuagint. It is certain, in any case, that the division of the books of Moses and of the Book of Josue did not originate with the Greeks, and this is the only point which it is important to establish here. The most ancient tradition has always considered the two works completely distinct. As far back as we can go, we see the Jews placing the Pentateuch in a separate category; the Book of Josue is ranked in a different series, that of the first prophets, where it occupies the first place. It is, therefore, established that a tradition which goes back to a very ancient time, and which was never contradicted until the close of the last century, attests the antiquity of the history which relates the conquest and the occupation of the Promised Land. The reasons brought forward by criticism against traditional belief, do not shake its solidity.

It is true, the Book of Josue is intimately connected with the Pentateuch, inasmuch as it takes up the history of the Hebrew people at the conclusion of Deuteronomy. The tribes which Moses had led out of Egypt did not die with him; their history does not end with that of their liberator; they continued without him the work which they began with him; they were already on the shores of the Jordan; they only needed to cross it to undertake the conquest of the Promised Land, for so long a time the object of their vows and of their desires. The writing which bears the name of Josue gives us the history of this conquest; it has, consequently, a connection with the events related in the books that precede it. But this is all the connection it has: it is the continuation of the writings of Moses; it is no part thereof.

"It is clear," says Reuss, "that a writer who commenced his history with the glowing promises made to the patriarchs, should conclude it by showing us their fulfillment; at least he could not pass over this accomplishment in silence." What a singular deduction, and how clearly does it show that rationalism is always blinded with partisan spirit! Certainly Moses could not pass over in silence the conquest of the Promised Land, provided

he did not die before the end of his task. In order that the author of the Pentateuch could relate the fulfillment of the promises, they had first to be fulfilled; but, they had not yet been when Moses died. They were fulfilled under Josue, and through Josue, and it was a writer posterior to Moses who completed the account of the work commenced by the liberator of the Hebrews and left by him incomplete.

Besides, we must remark that the existence of Deuteronomy, placed between Numbers and the Book of Josue, renders wholly inadmissible the hypothesis that the first six writings of the Old Testament form only one whole, or, as they say, a Hexateuch. Deuteronomy is an abridgment and a summary of the Mosaic Law; it forms its conclusion; consequently, it ends it and crowns it, so to speak. That which follows can be only a new work which takes up the thread of the history where the preceding author had left off. If the Hexateuch had ever existed in the sense understood by Rationalists, Deuteronomy should form, not its fifth, but its sixth part.

The Book of Josue has nothing in its composition in common with the Pentateuch; it forms a complete whole, and it has a plan of its own. Its subject is the conquest and partition of the Promised Land by Josue. Hence the division of the work into two parts. The first describes the battles and victories which render the Israelites masters of southern and northern Palestine. The second enumerates the possessions apportioned to the tribes of Israel in the conquered countries. Thus, we no longer have a kind of journal written from day to day as in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, nor a series of discourses as in Deuteronomy; it is quite a new and different plan. The author makes known to us the history of Josue and of the people whom the successor of Moses leads to victory, from the moment when he became their chief until his death. Never has a writing had a more marked individuality. Our adversaries themselves are obliged to acknowledge that the Book of Josue has a different character from that of the Pentateuch.

The Book of Josue is, therefore, a separate and independent work. It is connected with the Pentateuch like the Acts of the Apostles are connected with the Gospels, because it is the sequel of the same history; but it is, nevertheless, a completely distinct writ-

ing. The language undoubtedly is similar in many respects to that of the books of Moses, but what is there astonishing in this, and how could it be otherwise? Its author is very probably Josue himself, because he speaks as an eyewitness of the events he relates. Hence, he had lived with Moses, he had served him more than once, as we may suppose, as secretary; therefore, he should speak and write in a manner very much resembling that of Moses. The book which bears his name might have emanated from another, as some maintain, yet, certainly, after an intrinsic examination of the contents, any unprejudiced person has to admit that it could not have been composed at a time posterior to David, because, when it was compiled, Jerusalem was not the capital of Israel and still belonged to the Jebusites (Jos. xv. 63). This book was written, then, not long after the epoch of the exodus, and the Hebrew language could not have undergone much change.

Moreover, the resemblance is not such that one cannot perceive that it is another hand that holds the pen. The style of the narrative is no longer the same, and we find here for the first time expressions to which we were not accustomed. God is here called, for instance, *the Lord the God of the whole earth* (Jos. iii. 13), a denomination which never appears in the books of Moses. Some of the archaisms which we have pointed out in the latter, we no longer read in this new history. On the other hand, the uniformity of style in the whole book proves a different author: all over we find the same methods of expression, the same grammatical forms, the same turn of phrases, the same constructions, and the same orthography. The attacks on the unity and antiquity of the Book of Josue are, therefore, only sectarian and partisan; the arguments upon which Rationalists support themselves are poor and worthless. A learned professor of Tubingen, Dr. Himpel, who has discussed and refuted, with great learning and patience, most of the quibbles of rationalism, says rightly in conclusion, after having examined one by one all their objections: "This criticism is lacking in solid reasons to contest, either from the point of view of facts, or from the point of view of language, the unity, antiquity, and credibility of the Book of Josue."

II. HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIONS—1. *Circumcision at Galgal*.—Besides the general accusation against the antiquity of the Book of Josue, negative criticism attacks as contradictory and

as inadmissible certain details contained in this book. It is hardly necessary to say that they reject as impossible the miraculous passage of the Jordan and the not less miraculous taking of the city of Jericho (Jos. iii., vi.). But we need not here discuss the miracles; we give attention only to facts which, irrespective of their supernatural character, present some particular difficulty. The first of the facts of this kind which we have to examine is the history of the circumcision of the Israelites at Galgal.

After he had crossed the Jordan, Josue, by the order of God, caused the circumcision of all the children of Israel who had not yet received this sign of the Covenant between Jehovah and His people. Taking this incident as a basis, numerous objections have been raised against the historical character of the "Hexateuch" in general, and against the Book of Josue in particular. Reuss believes he has discovered contradictions in the different accounts concerning this practice of the Jews. He says:—

"There must have been different traditions about the origin of circumcision. According to the text most generally received, it was Abraham, who, by an express order of God, introduced this rite into his family, which must have been observed until the time of Moses (Jos. v. 5). But in Exodus (iv. 24–26) we read that the son of Moses was circumcised only during the return of the prophet from Madian into Egypt, having then attained the age of twenty-four years. The fact is mentioned as something new and extraordinary, and, moreover, the circumcision is performed by his mother. Finally, in the Book of Josue (v.) it is said that during the whole time that Moses was at the head of the people, circumcision had not been practiced. A similar disobedience to a fundamental article of the theocratic covenant is inexplicable, and we can see therein only a trace of a tradition different from that of Genesis (xvii.). Besides, circumcision being practiced by the Egyptians and other nations, we cannot see how it could be a distinctive sign of the Israelites."

Nothing is more simple than the reconciliation of the different facts mentioned by Reuss. Far from contradicting, they, on the contrary, perfectly explain one another. All that is related about the circumcision is founded upon the precept given to Abraham in Genesis. Josue formally supposes it, because we read in

his account that those of the Israelites who had gone forth from Egypt without being circumcised had "disobeyed the order of God" (Jos. v. 6). An angel threatens to kill the son of Moses or Moses himself, when he returned from Madian into Egypt with his family, because the child was not circumcised. The menacing attitude of the angel can be explained only by the existence of the law of circumcision. Punishment can be justly inflicted only for the violation of a law. The account of Exodus is very laconic, and does not enter into any details, but enough is said to render it comprehensible as a whole. It is Sephora, the wife of Moses, who circumcises the child. The law did not exclude women from officiating at this rite. But it is evident that Sephora performs it with reluctance, and only because she has no other alternative. When, afterwards, she exclaims to Moses; "A bloody spouse art thou to me," her remark is equivalent to an admission that it was she that had delayed the circumcision of her son. Moses would have wished to observe the customs of his race, but his wife had prevented the fulfillment of a ceremony that was repugnant to her because it was bloody. It was not expedient, however, that at the moment when Moses presented himself before the people to transmit to them the divine orders, that he should exhibit in his own family an example of the violation of the compact concluded between God and his fathers. Heaven itself, therefore, compels Sephora, who had not complied with the wishes of her husband, to consent finally to the fulfillment of the law, and, in spite of her disinclination, she resigns herself to the task, not, however, without complaining over its performance in the midst of the desert. The fact is not "mentioned as something new and extraordinary"; not a word intimates this; on the contrary, we repeat, the account presupposes the existence of the precept of circumcision.

But, continues Reuss, the Israelites were not circumcised during their sojourn in the desert. Now "a similar disobedience to a fundamental article of the theocratic covenant is inexplicable." Nothing, nevertheless, is more easy to explain, and it is only necessary to read the account of Josue with eyes that are not looking solely for possible contradictions, in order to see there clearly the reason why this rite was not practiced in the desert. The Israelites in the solitude of Sinai lived as nomads; hence, they often changed their encampments, and as they were surrounded by hostile tribes

they had to be ready to depart at a moment's warning. Under such conditions, circumcision was impracticable, because several days are required after the operation, to allow the wound to heal. Moses, therefore, had decided that the circumstances dispensed the people from the law until the time when they should enjoy rest and security, which would enable them to resume the practice. Josue himself demanded an observance of the rite only when the tribes of Israel had crossed the Jordan, and when he had the assurance that the people could rest in peace at Galgal without fear of disturbance. All this is clear from the express words of the sacred text: *After they were all circumcised, they remained in the same place of the camp, until they were healed* (Jos. v. 8).

What Mr. Reuss adds is also founded on a false interpretation. "Circumcision," he says, "being practiced by the Egyptians and other nations, we cannot see in it a distinctive sign of the Israelites." Certainly it cannot be seen, but what should oblige us to see it? The Professor of Strassburg here makes the Bible say something which it does not say. He has such an eager desire to find fault that he himself falls into the errors with which he wishes to charge the Sacred Scriptures. It is not the Bible which states that circumcision is "a distinctive sign of the Israelites"; it is Mr. Reuss who falsely attributes this language to it. God, in Genesis, says to Abraham that circumcision will be *a sign of the covenant* (Gen. xvii. 11), which they conclude together, but neither the word "distinctive," nor anything approaching to it, is to be found in these words. Now, the error which the rationalistic commentator pretends to discover consists solely in the word, "distinctive," which he adds himself to the sacred text. Far, therefore, from being contradictory, the biblical account is perfectly in harmony in all its parts, and the Book of Josue only confirms what the Pentateuch relates.

2. *The Conquest of Palestine.*—Many objections have been made against the conquest of Palestine by Josue. Some have pretended that what we read in regard to this subject in the book which bears his name is full of contradictions and is given the lie by the Book of Judges and the Books of Kings.

If objections such as these are made, it is because the meaning of the different passages of the text has been perverted in order to put them in opposition. The sacred author is represented as

declaring that the conqueror of the Promised Land took "all" the cities, "all" the strong places, in "all" the parts of Palestine. Now, Scripture does not state anything of the kind. Thus it is claimed that the Books of Kings contradict Josue, because they say that it was the Pharaoh of Egypt who, under Salomon, took Gazer, a city which had been taken already by the successor of Moses. There is no contradiction here. The Book of Josue mentions the death of the King of Gazer, but says nothing about the capture of his capital. Besides, we must not be surprised that several cities taken and burnt by the invaders, nevertheless remained or fell again into the possession of their first inhabitants. The latter could retake them, or need never have abandoned them completely; for one would have a wrong notion of the wars of this time were he to suppose that the conqueror left a garrison in the conquered places to keep them under his sway. The general custom, even of the most powerful monarchs, as the kings of Nineve for a long time, was to ruin a city by pillaging and burning it, in order to destroy its usefulness to the enemy; but generally the destruction was not complete, and when the conqueror had withdrawn with his troops, no one prevented the inhabitants from repairing the disasters of war, something they almost always hastened to do. This explains how cities besieged, taken, and burnt by the Hebrews could be built anew and be flourishing a few years later, in the hands of their former possessors. Such was the case with Hebron, for instance. This city was taken and sacked by Josue, but Israel did not then take effective possession of it, and it was enabled to rise anew, until Caleb established himself therein (Jos. x. 36-37; xi. 21; xiv. 12-13; xv. 14-15; Judges i. 10). It was the same with Dabir, taken and ruined, but not occupied, and conquered only later on, in a definitive manner by Othniel (Jos. x. 38-39; xi. 21; xv. 15-17; Judges i. 11-13).

Reuss, after having questioned and even denied the historical facts related in the Book of Josue, after having told us that "the floods of blood which we have seen spilt by Josue might, in a certain measure, have reddened only the paper of the austere writer," is finally obliged to make the following avowal: "However, at bottom, and in default of directly contrary testimonies, there is nothing impossible here. These things have happened elsewhere."

Other infidels, taking an opposite view and admitting that the conquest of Palestine has been a bloody one, protest in the name of morality against the war of extermination which the Israelites waged against the Chanaanites. What right, cried out already the Manicheans in the early ages, what right, repeat the enemies of the Bible in our days, had the descendants of Jacob to destroy this people and take their country? How could God, the Father and Creator of all men, ordain the massacre of these, His children?

Holy Scripture answers us that God chastised the Chanaanites for their crimes (Gen. xv. 16; Lev. xviii. 27; Wis. xii. 2-6). Certainly, He has the right to punish and cause to be punished at His pleasure the sins of His creatures. He can strike them with death if He so desires, either through sickness, or through accident, through plague, pest, famine, or war; whatever the form of death may be, it is within the divine prerogative, and it is only through want of reflection that one who believes in the existence of God can contest His right and His power or question His justice.

As to the part played by the Israelites, without speaking here of the donation of the land of Chanaan, which the Lord had made to their fathers, it is enough to remember that the oppression of Egypt had forced them to leave that inhospitable country, and that the conquest of Palestine was for them only an incident of that struggle for existence which is proclaimed in our days as one of the greatest laws that rule the world. They were in need of a country to live in, of lands to cultivate for food; they could obtain them only by force, and so to force they had recourse. Besides, their manner of warfare was not more bloody, or more cruel, than was usual in their day; they even treated the Chanaanites more humanely than the latter treated their enemies.

3. *The Miracle of Josue Stopping the Sun, and the Condemnation of Galileo.*—There is, perhaps, not a single passage of the Scripture that has caused more controversy than that in which the Book of Josue relates how the battle of Bethoron ended. In this battle the Chanaanites of southern Palestine were completely routed with great slaughter. Here the objections multiply and accumulate. And it is not only the sacred text that is attacked, but also the commentators and the Church itself. It is a strange fact that where during long centuries people saw only a miracle which everyone accepted with simply an act of faith, to-day every-

thing appears suspicious, obscure, doubtful, unacceptable, not only to infidels, but also to orthodox Protestants and even to some Catholics. Here is the translation of the famous passage: *Then Josue spoke to the Lord, in the day that he delivered the Amorrite in the sight of the children of Israel, and he said before them:*

*Move not, O sun, toward Gabaon,
Nor thou, O moon, toward the valley of Ajalon.*

And the sun and the moon stood still, till the people revenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of the just (ha-yāsar)? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down the space of one day. There was not before nor after so long a day, the Lord obeying the voice of a man, and fighting for Israel (Jos. x. 12-14).

The first difficulty which the reading of this passage presents, is to know in what sense we should interpret it. All the ancient interpreters have taken it in the literal sense; they saw therein that the sun really revolved around the earth, that the earth was immovable, that the sun and the moon had really stopped in their course at the order of Josue, and that the day of the battle of Bethoron had thus been the longest day that ever was upon earth. To-day, different objections are urged against every particular of this explanation.

As to the first point, that is, the stopping of the sun, the old interpretation is universally abandoned, since astronomy has established that the sun is the center of our solar system, and that it is the earth which revolves around this planet. If the conqueror of the Chanaanites commanded the sun to stand still, this does not imply that he admitted the system since called the system of Ptolemy, teaching the daily movement of the sun round the earth; he expressed himself like the rest of men, judging the facts according to sensible appearances. There is no more question in the Book of Josue, of the system of Ptolemy than of that of Copernicus. The Hebrew general, in order to obtain a miracle, employs the language used in his time and in his country, and God employs, in order to grant his request, the means which He judges proper. Throughout the Scripture, the sacred authors express themselves in a similar manner, that is to say conformably to the popular belief in regard to scientific questions, and the interpreters

are unanimous in admitting this fact. Hence we must not seek in their words scientific apothegms which they never had the intention of formulating.

But if the exegetists are in accord as to this first point, which is only the application of a general principle, they are divided on a not less important question, concerning especially the account that occupies us. Must we take, putting aside the astronomical question, the account of the Book of Josue strictly in its literal sense, that is, admit that the day of the victory of Bethoron was really the longest of days, or may we not see in this language only a poetical hyperbole, one of those exaggerations habitual to the Orientals? In the latter case did the historian of the conquest of Palestine believe that the conqueror of the Chanaanites had obtained from heaven a prolongation of the day, or did he understand that the book of the Just which he quotes spoke only in a poetic manner? All these different opinions have been and are still maintained. According to Rationalists, the author of the Book of Josue, in its present form, was a victim of the hyperboles of the poet that sung the victory of Josue. "The author has drawn his account from an ancient poem, inserted in the collection of ancient war chants," says Reuss. Here, as usual, the German professor asserts something without the least proof. What we have established already as to the antiquity of the Book of Josue is enough to show that what he asserts is false, for he supposes, contrary to the truth, that the author, who was mistaken about the character of the chant preserved in *Yāsār*, lived about one thousand years after the event. The sole reason that moves him to speak as he does, is simply that he would be obliged to admit a miracle were he to take the words in their natural sense, and this Reuss cannot do.

Liberal Rationalists and a certain number of Protestants, to whom we have to add a few Catholics whom the miracle frightens, hold an opinion quite opposed to that of Reuss. They believe that neither the poet nor the historian saw any prodigy, strictly speaking, in what we call improperly the stopping of the sun, and that, consequently, the readers of to-day must not see anything wonderful in it either. But this interpretation seems to be altogether forced, and it is difficult to make it agree with the letter of the text of Josue. It is, moreover, in contradiction with what we

read in Ecclesiasticus: *Was not the sun stopped in his anger and one day made as two?* (Ecclus. xlv. 5.)

It is true several scholars and critics claim to-day that the miracle of the stopping of the earth, in its diurnal rotation, would have brought on such a revolution in the system of our universe and produced such great catastrophes that it is impossible to believe in a similar revolution, of which besides there is no trace left.

To this objection we can answer that the suspension of the movement of our globe for a time would have changed nothing in the universe, beyond the prolongation of the day, except in so far as the Master of the universe might have willed; for it depended on His will to prevent all the catastrophes which would have resulted from the miracle of Josue understood in this sense. Those who admit that our earth really stopped, and among them we must count Galileo himself (cf. *Alla Granduchessa*, Opere, Milan, 1811), suppose, or even expressly affirm, that this first miracle was accompanied by a number of other miracles destined to remedy the disastrous effects which the temporary immobility of the earthly planet would have brought about.

But we have to add that nothing obliges us to believe in this indefinite multiplication of prodigies. We can very well admit the prolongation of the day beyond the ordinary hour, in the supposition that it was only an optical and meteorological phenomenon, a local miracle proportioned to a local end, and not an astronomical and universal phenomenon, and thus would disappear all the difficulties that frighten so many minds. In other words, God could grant the prayer of Josue without the movement of the earth and of the world being really stopped, and, consequently, without producing that general planetary disturbance which would have revolutionized the entire universe. (Cf. Kepler, *Astronomia nova*, Prague, 1609; J. B. Glaire, *Les Livres Saints vengés*, 2d edit., vol. ii., pp. 257-258.)

The above interpretation of the words of Josue commanding the sun to stop in its course is universally admitted to-day by commentators and theologians, but it gives rise to a new difficulty which we have to solve. It is raised not only by Rationalists, but also by Protestants. They pretend that Catholics are obliged to believe that the earth is immovable, and that the sun revolves around the earth, because the Church, the infallible interpreter of

Scripture, according to our belief, has defined that this is the real meaning of the words of Josue. "All Catholics," says Roberts, "are bound to conclude from the bull *Speculatores*, and from the decrees of Pope Paul V. and Urban VIII., that the heliocentric doctrine is false, and that this conclusion is infallibly certain." (*The Pontifical Decrees*, etc., Oxford, 1885.)

The decrees which Roberts attributes to Paul V. and to Urban VIII. are decisions of Roman Congregations against Galileo, the famous Florentine astronomer. No fact of Church history has been exploited with so much persistency and often with so much bad faith as the condemnation of this astronomer. The Church, we are told, has condemned herself in the person of this illustrious victim of the Inquisition: either it must be acknowledged that she was deceived, and in this case she has proved by this example that she can err in interpreting the Scriptures; or it must be maintained against all evidence that she did not err, and then all Catholics are bound to believe in the immobility of the earth.

Newspapers and reviews repeat these accusations *ad nauseam*. An entire library might be filled with the books that have been published on this subject. It seems pertinent, then, to establish just here the fact that it was not the Church, in her character as the Supreme Authority, that declared herself against the teachings of Galileo, but merely a fallible Congregation. Hence, the infallible authority of the Sovereign Pontiff explaining the word of God in no manner enters into the case, and accordingly there is no law obligatory on Catholics that forbids them to believe that the earth revolves around the sun. All the authentic documents in regard to the trial and condemnation of Galileo are available to-day, and nothing is easier than to find out the truth of this matter in its entirety.

In the first place it is important to remark that Galileo was not the inventor of the system which has rendered him so famous, and that the Church, before his appearance, was not at all opposed to the teaching of the theories of which Galileo made himself the propagator and defender.

The opinion of the movement of the earth around the sun was not new; the Pythagoreans had taught it 500 years before our era. In the fifteenth century, Nicholas of Cusa revived this view in Italy and upheld it publicly in his book *De Docta Ignorantia* as

the hypothesis best fitted to explain the system of the world, and not only did he not scandalize anyone, but he was raised to the dignity of a cardinal. About one century later, a Polish canon, who had been a professor at Rome, one of the creators of modern astronomy, Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), took up again and taught the same system in his book *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Bodies*, dedicated to Pope Paul III. "The orb of to-day seated on his royal throne, in the center of our universe," he there said, "governs the heavenly family which revolves in the space around him." He protested that it was only by the abuse of Scripture and by interpreting it falsely that any arguments could be drawn from it against his system. He died at the very moment when his work was published, but no one took umbrage at his opinions until Galileo appeared on the scene.

Nearly seventy years had elapsed since the death of Copernicus when Galileo took possession of the chair of mathematics at Florence in 1610. The new professor taught in his course the rotation of the earth. The first writing in which he publicly upheld the system of Copernicus had for its title: *History and Explanation of the Solar Spots*. It appeared in 1613, but for several years preceding he had been attacking, with all the force and energy of his excitable nature, the Peripatetic doctrines prevailing at that time, and thus made for himself many enemies. The storm that was gathering against him burst on February 5th, 1615. It was on the occasion of his letter to the Grand Duchess Christina. In this letter the author gave expression to some very just statements. He said:—

"Holy Scripture and nature both proceed from God; the former as having been inspired by the Holy Ghost; the latter as faithful executrix of the laws which God has given to it. But whilst Holy Scripture, accommodating itself to the ordinary understanding, rightly expresses itself in many cases according to appearances and by the use of words which cannot express the absolute truth of the things, nature follows an inflexible and unchangeable line, without ever transgressing the laws that have been imposed upon it. From this it follows that an incontestable scientific conclusion, the fruit of serious observations or of rigorous demonstrations, must not be called into doubt by an appeal to passages of Holy Scripture, which

apparently contradict this conclusion. . . . The duty of a commentator consists in seeking the true meaning of the sacred text, and this meaning, undoubtedly, will be in accord with the legitimate conclusions of natural science." (*Lettera a madama Christina*, Opere, Milan, 1811; vol. xiii. pp. 17-18,24.)

Galileo does not speak here otherwise than St. Augustine and St. Thomas; but unfortunately, after having promulgated correct principles, he makes a false application of them. In fact, he wishes to make use of them to defend, against the theologians, the system of Copernicus, and he does not pay attention to the fact that this system, at that time, was far from being evident and demonstrated. The proofs of it which he gave then and later on are very weak, as the scholars of our day all admit. They are only vague analogies, incapable of producing a reasonable conviction; hence, it is not surprising that they did not satisfy men reared with contrary opinions.

The letter to the Archduchess, dated December 21, 1613, was not printed at first; only copies of it were made. These were circulated, and soon produced in Florence and elsewhere a great commotion. The accusations made against Galileo, did not relate directly to his astronomical opinions, but to his Peripatetic propositions and his interpretations of the sacred text, which were judged false and dangerous.

One of the errors of Galileo was certainly to mix up with his discussions, either through his own fault or that of bad advisers, questions of theology and of sacred exegesis. While Bergier went too far when he said that Galileo had been pursued by the Inquisition, "not as a good astronomer, but as a bad theologian," it is not less certain that, if he had been more prudent and more reserved, and if he had not left his own domain, he might have avoided the persecution of which he became the object. But all the friends of Galileo advised him in vain to content himself with scientific demonstrations, "without entering the domain of the Scriptures." If the Inquisition was wrong in condemning the opinion of Galileo, it was not the opinion but the conduct of the Florentine astronomer which rendered the judgment unavoidable.

Galileo was denounced in the year 1615, under the pontificate of Paul V., to the Congregation of the Inquisition and of the

Index. After having examined both his doctrine and writings, they gave on February 26th and March 5th, 1616, two decisions, the one dogmatical, declaring as false and contrary to Scripture the opinion with regard to the immobility of the sun and to the mobility of the earth; the other disciplinary, forbidding Galileo to teach this opinion either as absolute truth or as an hypothesis. Out of regard for the author, the name of Galileo and the title of his works were not mentioned in the decree which condemned him; they required from him no formal retraction, and they imposed no penance upon him. Only they made him promise not to teach his opinion either orally or in writing.

At the same time that it condemned Galileo, March 5th, 1616, the Congregation of the Index disapproved of the book *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres*, of Copernicus, but only with the clause *donec corrigatur*. By a new decree of May 15th, 1620, the Congregation of the Index expressly permitted the maintenance of the system of the Polish canon, on the sole condition that it should not be taught as an absolute truth, but as a scientific hypothesis, and it authorized the reading of the work of Copernicus, in which there had been made some slight corrections, bearing on the passages in which this astronomer seemed to affirm his doctrines in a too positive manner. The Sovereign Pontiff neither signed nor approved explicitly any of these acts.

All appeared to be ended. Galileo had accepted his condemnation and promised without objection to submit to what they asked of him. However, in time he forgot his promises and, in different *Memoirs* which he published, he upheld his astronomical system in an indirect manner. Finally, sixteen years after his first condemnation, in 1632, he published his famous *Dialogo dei due massimi sistemi del mondo*. Although in the conclusion of the work, the question was not decided, nevertheless, in the course of the dialogue, a certain Simplicius defended the system of Ptolemy by ridiculous arguments, and it was impossible not to see in this writing an apology for the system of Copernicus. Indeed this was quite clear to everybody.

The publication of the *Dialogo* was, therefore, a formal violation of the promises made by Galileo. The matter was at once carried to Rome, the work was examined and, by a decree of June 16th, 1633, the Congregation of the Index condemned the publication.

Moreover, the author was forbidden to treat in future, in any manner whatever, the question of the movement of the sun and of the earth. But this was not all. A few days later, on June 22d, 1633, the Holy Office cited the Florentine astronomer before its tribunal. It declared him under suspicion of heresy for having violated the promises made in 1616: it obliged him to abjure his opinion and condemned him to an expiatory punishment, consisting of a seclusion, the conditions of which should be determined ultimately by the judges, and of the weekly recitation of the Penitential Psalms, for a term of three years. Galileo submitted. Whatever the enemies of the Church may say, he was never subjected to the torture nor confined in the dungeons of the Inquisition; he received, even after his condemnation, a pension from the Pope which continued until his death.

A month after the sentence rendered against Galileo by the Inquisition, August 23d, 1634, the *Dialogue on the Two Systems of the World* was put on the Index merely and simply, that is, without indicating the motives. At the same time, the judgment given against him by the Inquisition received, as well as his retraction, a great publicity. Thus ended that grave affair. Since 1634, we find no trace of any new condemnation of the system of Copernicus. In 1757, under Benedict XIV., it was decided that the prohibition to teach, except as an hypothesis, the immobility of the sun should be suppressed in the editions of the Index; nevertheless, the works previously condemned were maintained therein, and we find them still in the edition of 1819. Finally, a decree of the Inquisition of September 25th, 1822, approved by Pius VII., authorized without restriction the teaching of the astronomers on the mobility of the earth, and all the books that had been condemned for having defended the ideas of Copernicus disappeared from the following edition of the Index, which was printed in 1835.

Such are the facts. Does it follow from this that Catholics are obliged to believe that the real meaning of the passage of Josue, commanding the sun to stand still, is in opposition to the system of Copernicus? Not at all. We acknowledge that the Congregations condemned Galileo, but nothing forces us to accept their interpretation as true. The decree of 1616, considered in itself, lacks the characteristics required by the Vatican Council for the definitions on which the Church places the seal of Infallibility.

CHAPTER II

THE BOOK OF JUDGES—SAMSON

AMONG the ancient authors there was none that contested the antiquity of the Book of Judges, and the Rationalists of to-day do not refuse to acknowledge that it goes back to a very remote epoch. They even assure us that, by its date, it is the first of the writings of the Old Testament and they place it at the head of the Bible, thus depriving Genesis of this honor. But they make two leading objections against the book: First, according to them, the history of the Judges of Israel is little more than a collection of legends and myths, particularly the history of Samson and of Gedeon. Second, they reproach the Book of Judges with praising blamable actions and approving of real crimes, such as the assassination of Eglon by Aod, that of Sisara by Jahel, and the immolation of the daughter of Jephte by her own father. Let us answer to these charges.

I. SAMSON.—The history of this Judge of Israel being filled with wonderful facts, heaven having assisted him in a supernatural manner in his warfare against the Philistines, the enemies of the miraculous furiously attack his history, pretending to see in what is said of him only contradictions or impossibilities. "This life," they say, "is too fantastical and too wonderful to be real, and Samson is only a myth or symbol."

Thus, according to Steinthal, Samson simply represents the sun: his name is derived from the Hebrew *Semes*, sun; his hair is figurative of the rays of the sun; his achievement against a lion is only a symbolism, for the light color of the lion is that of the sun; and his mane recalls the rays of the orb of day; the honey produced in the mouth of the lion signifies that the bees work especially when the sun is in the sign of the lion; the foxes let loose through the grain is the sun causing rust in the harvest; the jawbone of an ass is the lightning; Dalila is the moon; the disappearance of the hair of Samson and his death are the winter.

In presence of similar theories, it is enough to read over the account of the Book of Judges to see on what side the truth lies. Some Rationalists have been obliged to acknowledge this, and we

borrow from Ewald the intrinsic reasons which force them to see in Samson a real personage: "He always acted on the very limited territory of the tribe of Dan, where he is also buried in the family tomb of his father Manue. All his struggles amid different vicissitudes are invariably directed against the Philistines, whom he pursues, without respite, from his youth until his death, just as Hannibal pursued the Romans. The twenty years of his judicature are evidently connected with the first years of the preponderance of the Philistines, at the time when they were the most formidable and when the small tribe of Dan was in danger of being completely exterminated by them."

As to the reasons which have moved our adversaries to make of Samson a myth, it is first of all on account of miraculous facts contained in his history. Not admitting the miraculous, they have to reject what is said of Samson. Secondly, certain pretended impossibilities, which they believe to see in the biblical account. They say:—

1. There are no lions in Palestine, how, therefore, could Samson kill a young lion there (Judges xiv. 5)? Because there were lions in Palestine in former times; Scripture names two villages called Leboath, or "the Lionesses," situated in the tribes of Juda (Jos. xv. 32) and of Simeon (xix. 6); the name of Lais (Judges xviii. 7) has undoubtedly the same origin. Holy Scripture often mentions the lions (I. Ki. xvi. 34; III. Ki. xii. 24; xx. 36; Jer. v. 6; xii. 8, etc.), and finally, we know through John Phocas, who in the fifteenth century made a pilgrimage to Palestine, that there were still some there at that time.

2. Scripture also relates that the bees made their honey-comb in the mouth of the lion killed by Samson (xiv. 8). They have regarded it as impossible that bees should have come to establish themselves in a carcass in the state of putrefaction. But it may have been that Samson went by the carcass of the lion and found honey in its mouth only a long time after he had killed it, the expression *after some days* being often employed in Scripture to designate a space of considerable time. If, therefore, there remained of the lion only a skeleton, these odorless remains would have nothing that could keep away the bees. We may even understand in the expression *after some days* its natural meaning: in fact, in these countries the heat sometimes completely dries up dead animals within twenty-four hours, and without any previous decomposition. Dead bodies are thus reduced to the state of mummies,

and have no odor capable of driving off bees; the latter, besides, being very numerous in Palestine, deposit their provisions of honey wherever they can and not wherever they wish. Finally, it is a miraculous fact.

3. At all times objections have been made against the episode where it said that Samson let loose into the grain of the Philistines three hundred foxes (or rather jackals) with lighted torches. This number of three hundred appears exaggerated to the rationalistic critics. But we meet everywhere in the East, and particularly in Palestine, jackals living in troops. As to the difficulty of procuring such a large number at one time, it is enough to remark: (1) That the piercing cries uttered during the night by the jackals render their capture very easy. (2) That it is not necessary to suppose that the jackals were let loose all at once into the Philistine fields. On the contrary, it is quite probable that Samson, wishing to starve his enemies, had to spread the destruction over the whole country by letting loose his jackals in different places.

In a word, in all the details which it is still possible to-day to verify, the study of the country and the local customs confirm the scrupulous exactitude of the biblical details to such a point that, even from the scientific point of view alone, it is impossible to question the veracity of the historian of Samson.

II. GEDEON.—This Judge of Israel delivered his people from the tyranny of the Madianites, and by such a complete victory that the latter disappeared thenceforth from the history of God's people. But the hand of God appears in such a visible manner in the history of Gedeon, that the Rationalists do not hesitate to attack its authenticity, despite the numerous details into which the author enters, details of which are all fully in accord with what science teaches of the topography and the customs of Palestine during this epoch. All that they admit, for instance, M. Vernes, is the reality of a "signal defeat" undergone by the Madianites and the honor of which is attributed to a powerful and rich sheik by the name of Yerubbaal, . . . preferably designated by the name of Giudeon." As to the rest, it is only a "legend, forged by additions and successive garnishings." The only reason which the infidel critic gives for his assertions is, according to him, that the Madianite chiefs die in two different ways, in two different localities, where they are equally designated under two different names (Judges vii. 24-25; viii. 10-12).

The objection is its own answer: It would be astonishing, we admit, if the author had made his personages die in two different manners only a few lines apart, if they bore the same name, and if they were one and the same person. But, since they do not bear the same name, it is quite natural to suppose that there is not question of the same chiefs, and that Oreb and Zeb might not have died in the same manner as Zebee and Salmana.

But if Rationalists reject, in the history of Gedeon, all that supposes the miracle, they are very careful to keep as historical all that can serve them as pretext to attack the religion of the Israelites. For instance:—

1. According to the biblical account, it was an angel of the Lord who came to tell Gedeon to take up arms against the Madianites, and who promised him the victory (vi. 11–24). Now, according to this narrative, Gedeon offered to the angel a kid and unleavened bread, and the Vulgate calls this offering by the name of *sacrifice*.

Rationalists conclude from this that at the time of the Judges they knew neither the ceremonial rites, nor the Levitic priesthood; nor the unity of the sanctuary, of which the Pentateuch speaks; and hence infer that this account is not authentic. We have already answered this objection in Chapter V. First Book.

2. Gedeon having received from his father, on an occasion related in Judges vi. 24–32, the surname of Jerobaal, Rationalists would see in this name one of the numerous signs in which they pretend to find traces of primitive polytheism among the Hebrews. In reality, it is only necessary to read the episode in question to see that this name indicates an enmity between the one who carried it and Baal himself.

3. After the victory, Gedeon causes all the golden earrings taken from the enemy to be delivered to him, and later on he makes an ephod of them, which became an object of idolatry for the people. It was but natural for infidels to grasp this fact, and to see in it again a trace of the primitive idolatry of the Hebrews. But in the same passage it is said that the impious worship occasioned by the ephod received its chastisement, which shows very clearly that this was only an abnormal and accidental fall from grace. Moreover, there is no proof that Gedeon himself was guilty, or that this ephod was an idol, a statue, as Rationalists claim, and not the sacerdotal garment called *Ephod*.

The sacerdotal ephod was composed of two parts, of which one covered the breast and the upper part of the body, whilst the other

hung back of the shoulders. The two parts were attached together on the top of the shoulders by two onyxes, upon each of which were engraved six of the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The ephod was held together below by a golden, purple, and linen cincture. On the ephod of the high priest was placed the pectoral, containing two precious stones, *Urim* and *Thumim*, of which he made use to consult the Lord. As to the manner this was done, we cannot tell. To accuse the Hebrews of idolatry, Rationalists would have to prove first that the ephod was a statue and not a garment; but this they do not do. On the contrary, the ephod is described at length in Exodus (xxviii.) and ranked among the sacerdotal garments. As to the divers biblical passages where there is question of the consultation of the Lord through the ephod (I. Ki. xiv., xxi., xxii., etc.), we understand them better in seeing in the ephod a garment, rather than a statue, and even in one of these passages, quoted by Rationalists, we see Saul putting to death priests who had consulted the Lord for David, and it is stated quite explicitly that these priests *wore the linen ephod* (I. Ki. xxii. 18). The ephod was, therefore, a garment, and whatever desire Rationalists may have to establish the pretended primitive idolatry of the Hebrews, they must give up the notion of seeking here an argument in their favor.

III. AOD.—The murder of Eglon, King of Moab, and oppressor of the Hebrews, by a Hebrew, named Aod, delivered the oppressed from bondage. (cf. Jud. iii.) It was an act of courage, reprehensible on account of the means employed by the liberator of his people, but only the perfection of the morals of the Gospel has taught us to condemn it. Athenes raised statues to Harmodius and to Aristogiton for having killed the tyrant Hipparchus; Rome celebrated the glory of Mutius Scævola for having slipped into the camp of Porsenna in order to kill him whilst he besieged Rome.

"Dolus an virtus, quis in hoste requirat" (Virgil, *Æneid*, iv. 11).

Aod believed that he had the right to kill, as did Scævola, the enemy of his people by having recourse to cunning. Scripture tells us nowhere that his act, certainly excusable on account of good faith, was morally good in itself. It is the same with the act of *Jahel* killing in her tent, where he had taken refuge, Sisara, general of the armies which had combated the Hebrews (cf. Judges iv.).

As to the immolation of the daughter of *Jephthe* by her own father (if we have to admit this, as the text seems to require) we can only disapprove of it with horror; but never did the sacred writers approve of this abominable sacrifice, against which the Mosaic law had provided, for it was unfortunately common among the Chanaanite tribes, and which it had severely prohibited (Lev. xx. 2; xviii. 21; Deut. xii. 31; xviii. 10).

CHAPTER III

BOOKS OF KINGS AND OF PARALIPOMENA

THE most punctilious critics cannot help but acknowledge the historical value of the Books of Kings. "Events commence to become grouped and connected," writes Reuss, "and the situations are sketched more plainly." The archæological studies made in the Orient, the deciphering of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, the discovery of the monuments of Ninive and of Chaldea, have confirmed the accuracy of the sacred account by enabling us to verify it by means of documents borrowed from foreign sources. Infidelity is, therefore, obliged to render justice to the historians of the kingdom of Juda and of Israel. Infidel criticism pretends, however, to find inaccuracies in their writings. Moreover, it denounces the conduct and blackens the character of several personages praised by the sacred writers. Hence, in the first place, we have to answer the objections raised against certain accounts of the historians of Kings, and justify, in the second place, against unjust attacks, the prophets and princes praised in this part of Holy Scripture.

At all times did exegetists point out in the Books of Kings and of Paralipomena certain difficulties, some in regard to various details that appear little in accord with one another, others in regard to certain figures or assertions which seem exaggerated and improbable. At all times, commentators have tried to reconcile the divergencies of the text and to explain the figures we read therein. Negative criticism has hastened to collect the objections, without keeping account of the answers, for the purpose of gathering weapons of every kind against Holy Scripture.

Rationalists pretend to conclude from the divergencies that are pointed out in the histories of the Kings that they are the work of unskillful compilers who, having drawn from different sources, did not have sufficient knowledge to separate, in these different accounts, the true from the false, that which they should preserve and that which they should reject, so that they have given us a confused and undigested amalgamation of what they found in previous writings. In making these accusations against the historians of the kingdoms of Juda and of Israel, the objective point of infidels is to bring them into discredit; they assert that their work is wanting in unity, in order to maintain that it is unworthy of belief. All these accusations are without foundation, as we shall prove. The history of the kings who reigned over God's people is known to us from three distinct sources, each forming a whole, which we shall study successively: (1) The Books of Samuel or First and Second Books of Kings. (2) The Third and Fourth Books of Kings. (3) The First and Second Books of Chronicles or Paralipomena.

I. OBJECTIONS RAISED AGAINST THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, OR FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS OF KINGS.—It is especially in the two Books of Samuel, or First and Second Books of Kings, that apparent contradictions have been pointed out. The developments which the historian gives to his account obliges his return several times to the same subject, and he has not always presented it in the same light, now considering it under one aspect, and now under another, and writing besides, according to the Oriental fashion,—that is, without confining himself to a rigorous and logical order, and without believing himself obliged to frame in a consecutive manner all the parts of his account. He counted on readers who were straightforward and of good faith like his own, and did not foresee malicious and critical interpretation. When one is not predisposed to find the Israelitic writer at fault, nothing is generally easier than to reconcile what at first sight appears to be contradictory. We must never forget, in reading the Oriental authors, that they were not acquainted with what we call the art of composition, and that, consequently, their writings are replete with ellipses and omissions, which we must supply. This is generally very easy. Without entering here into a minute and elaborate examination of all the objections, it will suffice to quote some examples, selected from the principal ones, to show how insignificant are the divergencies of which the adversaries of the Bible would like to make manifest

contradictions. We are even surprised that educated men, who are acquainted with the peculiarities of style of Semitic writings, dare to allege in support of their thesis difficulties as futile as those they present to us.

The first is drawn from the causes that brought about the establishment of the kingdom of Israel. One of these causes was the old age of Samuel and the injustices committed by his sons (I. Ki. viii. 5); this was evidently not the most important. There were several others, as is always the case in political revolutions. If the Israelites desired to have a king, because Samuel was unable to fulfill any longer his functions as Judge, and as they had no confidence in his children, they desired it still more in order to enable them to resist their enemies, and particularly the Ammonites (xii. 12), whom they were too weak to combat with success as long as they were divided, but whom they could, on the contrary, conquer easily if all their forces were united under one chief. The Israelitic historian mentions this motive when his subject leads him to speak of the war; on another occasion he gives the age of Samuel as a reason for the institution of the monarchy. In all this there is not the least contradiction; merely the author has not enumerated together and in a methodical way, as a writer of our time would do, the different causes that occasioned the institution of royalty.

The account of the election of Saul gives rise to similar reflections. He is at first anointed king by Samuel privately, by the order of God (x. 1), then he is designated publicly by lot before the assembled people (x. 21),—the one does not exclude the other; finally, he is universally recognized by all Israel after his victory over the Ammonites (xi. 15), because the deliverance of Jabes of Galaad and his triumph over the besiegers put an end to the partial opposition which had manifested itself until then against his elevation to the throne.

The contradictions which criticism attempt to discover in the history of David, after his victory over Goliath, do not exist either. The young hero carries the head of the Philistine to Jerusalem, although it was only later, when he became king (II. Ki. v. 9), that he got possession of the fortress of Mount Sinai. But we must remark that if the citadel still belonged at that time to the Jebuseans, the city itself already belonged to the Israelites (I. Ki. xvii. 54). David immediately after the combat, deposits

in his tent, or in the house of his father, the arms of the giant he had slain (xvii. 54), but he lays aside the sword which he consecrates to God and which he takes up again later at Nob (xxi. 1-9). Nothing is easier, therefore, than to reconcile these different details and other similar ones. To conclude from this that the author of the Books of Samuel was an ignorant compiler, who did not know how to make use of the material he consulted, is to obscure what is clear and to abuse wrongfully the manner of writing among the Orientals.

Rationalists believe they find a more glaring contradiction, and, according to them, an inexplicable one, except we admit the use of two wholly different sources between the account of the anointing of the young David by Samuel and the account of his arrival at the camp of Saul at the time of his combat against Goliath (xvi. 1; xviii. 5). When Samuel arrives at Bethlehem, the historian makes us acquainted with the father and brothers of David (xvi. 1-13), and, a little further on, he presents them anew to the reader, as if he had never yet spoken of them (xvii. 12-15). Before the war, Saul appoints David, who is very brave his armor-bearer (xvi. 18, 21), and, when the war breaks out, we see David watching his flock and going to the camp only by chance, in order to bring the necessaries of life to his brothers (xvii. 17). But what is still more extraordinary, Saul, who, before going to combat the Philistines, had chosen David as his armor-bearer and knew him well, as also his father (xvi. 18-22), does not know the young man who slew Goliath (xvii. 55-58). Such is the objection.

We freely acknowledge that a historian of our day would not have written his account as the Israelitic historian has done, but we must not forget that we are judging a Semitic writer and not a modern writer. One of the most notable peculiarities of Semitic writings, by which they are especially distinguished from our way of relating, are the repetitions. The Orientals write as they speak. Now all those who have traveled in the East know how the native narrators are given to repetitions. We notice this peculiarity in all the books of these countries, and generally among the young people or among those who have remained, so to say, children in their literary forms. The sons of Noah are enumerated four times in four consecutive chapters (Gen. v. 32; vi. 10; ix. 18; x. 1); certain genealogies are repeated several times in the same book, as for instance, in Paralipomena (I. Par. vii.

6-7, and viii. 1-3; viii. 20-40, and ix. 35-44, etc.). Hence only those who are ignorant of the customs of the Oriental writers can be really surprised at these repetitions.

The two accounts in question are not, however, completely independent. The historian does not speak the second time of the brothers of David as if they were entirely unknown to us, and, on the subject of David himself, he is careful to call to mind that he has already made him known to his readers: "David," he says, "the son of that man of Ephrata (before mentioned, justly explains the Vulgate), of Bethlehem, Juda" (I. Ki. xvii. 12).

But how, it is insisted, could Saul display ignorance of David, since he had asked his father to leave David with him to be his armor-bearer (xvi. 19-22), and how does it come that Abner does not know him any more than his royal master?

The answer is easy and it was given by the great Doctor of the Syrian Church, St. Ephrem, a long time ago. The King knew the shepherd of Bethlehem well enough to attach him to his person, in the quality of armor-bearer and musician; but the courage of David astonishes him and awakens anew the royal interest in him; moreover, having promised his daughter to the conqueror of Goliath, he desires, as a good father, more definite information as to the character and family of the one who might become his son-in-law, and with this object he charges Abner to learn what he can about David (xvii. 55-57). Nothing could be more natural and proper. Perhaps, also, the King beheld in David the one who was to supplant him, as Samuel had announced to him: this is also a remark of St. Ephrem. The very persistence which Saul displays in making inquiries, shows that the matter was of no little importance to him, but one of great moment, to which he attached great value. Hence we have no real contradiction here, any more than in the other alleged inaccuracies in the First and Second Books of Kings.

II. OBJECTIONS DRAWN FROM THE CHRONOLOGY OF THE THIRD AND FOURTH BOOKS OF KINGS.—Most of the difficulties which Rationalistic critics allege against the Third and Fourth Books of Kings are so insignificant that they are hardly worthy of mention. One only merits some attention. It is that drawn from chronology.

We have already given attention to the uncertainty of the biblical chronology of the primitive times. The chronology of the Books of Kings is not less uncertain, although naturally circumscribed within a more limited sphere, and for different reasons.

Whilst there is question of centuries at the beginning of the world, there is question here only of some years; whilst the synchronisms are wanting in Genesis, in the Books of Kings, on the contrary, they abound; but, as we shall see, they increase the difficulty instead of solving it. One single point is common to the two problems, namely, in both cases there are alterations of figures. They are established in Genesis by a comparison of the original text with the ancient versions; they are manifest, in the history of the Kings, by the simple comparison of parallel passages of the Books of Kings and Paralipomena.

Already St. Jerome wrote to the priest Vitalis: "Read all the books of the Old and New Testament, and you will find such a discord as to the number of the years, such a confusion as to the duration of the reigns of the kings of Juda and of Israel, that to attempt to clear up this question will rather appear the occupation of a man of leisure than of a scholar" (Ep. lii. 5). It will suffice to quote an example to prove this "confusion" and this "discord" of figures. In the Fourth Book of Kings we read: *Ochozias was two and twenty years old when he began to reign*, and in the Second Book of Paralipomena: *Ochozias was forty-two years old when he began to reign* (IV. Ki. viii. 26; II. Par. xxii. 2). The contradiction is flagrant. More or less ingenious explanations have been suggested in order to reconcile these contradictions, without admitting any alteration, but none of these explanations is satisfactory, and Cornelius à Lapide was right in saying that one of the numbers given is due to an error of the copyists.

All the analogous difficulties must undoubtedly be subject to this explanation. These corruptions of original figures may be easily accounted for. We find them in all the ancient authors, and they were unavoidable before the invention of printing (which has not done away with them completely), when each copy of a book was made by hand. St. Augustine remarked that the figures were generally the most defective part in the transcriptions. A copyist is guided by the general meaning when he transcribes a phrase where he meets a word badly written, and thus he may guess the true reading, but when he finds in the text which he copies one or more numerals nearly illegible, in many cases nothing can guide to a positive knowledge of its or their determination. The transcribers of the works in question doubtless met with such a difficulty in the case of Ochozias, who, according to

one account, commenced to reign when he was twenty-two years of age, according to another, not until he was forty-two years of age. Who is there accustomed to writing that has not been embarrassed in deciphering or transcribing a numeral which he himself has written, but which he has badly formed? Hence it would have been necessary for God to work a continual miracle, if He had wished to preserve without alteration the figures of Scripture and particularly those of the history of the Kings. This miracle He did not perform. As these figures are without importance for faith and morals, Providence has permitted that a part of them should be altered. Criticism has the right to rectify them if it can do so, but it has no right to draw any conclusions from them against the authority and accuracy of the sacred books. It could justly accuse of error the inspired writers only in so far as it would find false figures in their original work, as it came from their pen. Now, nothing authorizes us, even without taking account of the divine inspiration which guaranteed against all error the authors of both the Old and New Testament, to ascribe to them the present alterations of their text.

A recent attempt has been made, it is true, to hold the sacred writers responsible for the contradictions of dates which the sacred and Assyrian histories present. The Assyrian epigraphy, which has strikingly confirmed so many points in the sacred account, appears to disagree with it on the subject of chronology. The synchronisms which the two sources offer us are, at first sight, irreconcilable. The Assyrian chronology was exactly fixed in the documents of Ninive, by means of eponyms who gave their name to the year, like the consuls, at Rome. The original inscriptions having come down to us, they could not have been altered through any transcription; hence they merit our full confidence. Now, they contradict the accounts of Holy Scripture. Harmony exists as to the taking of Samaria by the Assyrians, in the year 721 B. C.; but according to the biblical chronology generally received, Achab, King of Israel, died in 898 or 897 before our era, and according to the Assyrian chronology, he was defeated with the allied kings, at Karkar, by the King of Ninive, Salmanasar III., in 854, that is, forty years after the date one assigns to his death. Ozias, King of Juda, reigned from 809 to 758, and the inscriptions of Teglath-Phalasar portray him at war with this king between the years 742 or 740, sixteen or eighteen years after his

death. Manahem, King of Israel, reigned from 770 to 759, and twenty-one years after the end of his reign, in 738, Teglath-Phalasar II. counts him among his tributaries. Hence, there can be no more formal contradiction, say the enemies of the Bible.

Yes, apparently, we answer; in reality, no. The Assyrian chronology is in opposition to the *artificial* chronology drawn from the biblical texts by the commentators, but not with the biblical texts themselves. Not only do the Ninevite documents and the Israelitic documents not contradict one another at all, but they are perfectly in accord as to the synchronisms; both state that Ozias, King of Juda, and Manahem, King of Israel, were contemporaries of Teglath-Phalasar II., as Salmanasar IV., Sargon, Sennacherib have been contemporaries of Ezechias, King of Juda. The Assyrian epigraphy confirms, therefore, the sacred account instead of contradicting it, wherever the alterations of figures are out of question. The discord exists only in the calculations made by the chronologists.

To understand this discord, it is enough to recall to mind what we have said already: that on account of the errors of copyists, the reigning years of the kings of Israel and of Juda are not known to us with certainty. By adding the figures of the years of the kings of Juda, on the one hand, and those of the kings of Israel, on the other, instead of finding the same total sum for these two kingdoms, in the two calculations, from the accession of Jeroboam, first king of Israel, until the ruin of Samaria, about twenty years are wanting in the chronology of the kingdom of Israel. To fill up this gap many artifices have been employed, among others, the supposition of two interregnums in Israel. The existence of these two interregnums does not rest, however, upon any proof. Almost all the chronologists have admitted that we must lengthen the duration of the kingdom of Israel. The Assyrian chronological canons, whose authority, contestable in some points of detail, is not so in their entirety, show that instead of adding years to the kingdom of Israel, we have to cut off some from the kingdom of Juda. Achab and his successors, as well as the kings of Juda, their contemporaries, are somewhat less ancient than supposed.

Hence, what must be corrected are the computations of the ancient chronologists. The text of the sacred authors is outside these controversies of scholars, except in one particular, namely, that of rectifying altered figures, which, however, do not affect

the inspiration and veracity of the sacred authors, as we have remarked already. We do not need to make inquiry here as to which chronological system is to be preferred. It is criticism that should labor to discover, by means of profane synchronisms, which are the figures that have been altered, and thus to restore the primitive numbers.

III. OBJECTIONS DRAWN FROM THE BOOKS OF PARALIPOMENA. —All the modern scholars agree in acknowledging, in spite of some insignificant restrictions, the historical value of the Third and Fourth Books of Kings. They cannot refuse them this justice, since the discovery of the Assyrian inscriptions has confirmed, in a manner both striking and unexpected, the accuracy of their accounts. But infidels revenge themselves on Paralipomena for the praises they are forced to make in regard to the Books of Kings. It would seem that they cannot have enough contempt for this compilation, which is altogether without value in their eyes. At the beginning of this century they went so far as to deny the good faith of the author. Subsequently they pretended that the author of Paralipomena invented everything, not only the genealogies and the accounts which we do not read in the other books of the Old Testament, but also the title of the writings which he cites as the sources of his informations. These accusations are so evidently false that most of Rationalists of our days have notably modified them. Wellhausen, however, has taken them up anew in his *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*. In this work he revives all the objections of his predecessors, in spite of the decisive answers that had been made to them. His motive in doing this is the desire to deny by all means the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch; and since the authority of Paralipomena is sufficient to overthrow his favorite thesis, he does not find terms contemptuous enough to characterize this work. "Its author," he says, "mixes and confounds everything, he amplifies, falsifies, and invents." Such an account is "a frightful example of the impudent imagination of the Jews;" such another is "nonsense."

In spite of these accusations launched against Paralipomena, when we come to the details it will be found that the number of the incriminated facts is not so considerable. We are going to examine them successively, and we will show that it is wrong to reproach Esdras, the probable and well informed author of this historical writing, with inaccuracies.

1. *The Captivity of King Manasses.*—The first and principal reproach against the Books of Paralipomena is the account of the captivity of Manasses, King of Juda, at Babylon. Some critics do not hesitate to affirm that it is a mere fable, deserving no credit whatever.

Manasses seduced Juda, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to do evil beyond all the nations, which the Lord had destroyed before the face of the children of Israel. And the Lord spoke to him, and to his people, and they would not hearken. Therefore He brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of the Assyrians: and they took Manasses, and carried him bound with chains and fetters to Babylon. And after that he was in distress he prayed to the Lord his God: and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers. And he entreated Him, and besought Him earnestly: and He heard his prayer, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom, and Manasses knew that the Lord was God (II. Par. xxxiii. 9-13).

The first objection against this account is drawn from the silence of the Books of Kings, which do not speak of such an important event. This objection would have some foundation if the Books of Kings contained a complete history of the kingdoms of Juda and of Israel; but it is well known that these books often give but a summary of the events, and that they refer the reader, for fuller details and for the facts they omit, to more extended writings, to the chronicles of the kings of Juda and of Israel. Hence, it is not surprising that Esdras should relate events which he derived from other sources, although we do not read them in Kings. The existence of omissions in the latter work is, moreover, unquestioned to-day. The Assyrian inscriptions have revealed to us several episodes of the history of Israel which were totally unknown to us, such as the defeat of Achab at Karkar, the paying of tribute by Jehu to the King of Assyria, and various circumstances of the campaign of Sennacherib against Ezechias, King of Juda.

2. *The Annals of Assurbanipal*, King of Ninive, also show us how poorly founded are all the other objections raised against the Book of Paralipomena. As the accuracy of this account had been questioned, it was by a special permission of Providence that the cuneiform documents were brought to light to confirm it in every particular. It was denied that a "king of Assur" had invaded

Palestine under the reign of Manasses. Assurbanipal, King of Assur, on one of his cylinders, states as follows :

- 69. Toward Egypt and Ethiopia I directed my march.
- 70. In the course of my expedition, 22 kings
- 71. from the shores of the (Mediterranean), all
- 72. tributaries, dependent upon me.
- 73. in my presence (came and kissed my feet)—G. Smith, *History of Assurbanipal*, pp. 17-18.

Another cylinder of the same monarch enumerates these twenty-two kings, and the second is "Manasses, King of Juda" (*Minasi, sar Yahudi*). The first statement objected to in the account of Paralipomena is, therefore, completely verified.

It has also been denied that the King of Assur bound and placed in fetters a monarch, in order to lead him away into captivity. Again Assurbanipal answers this objection.

"Sarludari, King of Zihinu (in Egypt), and Nechao (King of Memphis), they (the soldiers of Assurbanipal) took and with iron chains and fetters, they bound their hands and feet."

Moreover, we can still see ancient Assyrian bas-reliefs which depict these unfortunate monarchs bound hand and foot.

It is especially denied that Manasses could have been led by an Assyrian king to Babylon, instead of being led to Ninive, the capital of Assyria. But nothing proves better than this fact the correctness of the sacred historian. A forger would have reasoned, as do modern infidels, and he never would have imagined that Manasses was led to Babylon. But we know by the history of Assurbanipal that his brother, Samassumukin, whom he had established regent of Babylon, rebelled against him and carried with him a great number of the tributaries of Assyria, among whom was, unquestionably, Manasses. Assurbanipal crushed the insurrection at Babylon itself; took the title of king of that city and stopped therein for some time. Hence, there is nothing surprising in the fact that Manasses was led to this capital, where his conqueror must have been well pleased to show to the Babylonians, in the person of the King of Juda, how he chastised those that threw off his yoke.

3. *The Restoration of Manasses to the Throne.*—Finally, infidels believe it incredible that the King of Assyria, after having treated Manasses so cruelly, should restore him to the throne. Again Assurbanipal himself answers. He relates that he gave back to

Nechao, King of Egypt, his kingdom, although he had inflicted upon him the same harsh treatment that he had inflicted upon the King of Juda.

61. In the place where the father that had begotten me, at Sais.

62. . . . had constituted upon him a kingdom, I reëstablished him.

63. Good deeds and favors, beyond those of the father who had begotten me, I returned and gave to him (G. Smith, *Op. Cit.*).

Hence, there is not a single detail of the account of Paralipomena which is not verified by the annals of Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, who led away Manasses captive to Babylon.

Most of the other objections made by infidels against the Book of Paralipomena refer to words and small details. One reproaches it, in the first place, with having said that Salomon had asked Hiram to cut for him upon Mount Libanon, not only cedar-wood, but also sandal-wood, *algunmim* or *almuggim* (II. Par. ii. 8; III. Ki. v. 6). As sandal-wood is found only in India, the King of Tyre could not procure it from Mount Libanon.

The author of Paralipomena knew very well that sandal-wood came from India, because he says so himself in speaking of the voyages of Salomon's fleet (II. Par. ix. 10). But if we may understand sandal-wood by the word *algunmim* in the latter passages, there is no proof that this word has absolutely the same meaning in the first. Several ancient versions have translated this expression by pine (Septuagint, Vulgate, II. Par. ii. 7; Josephus, *Ant. Judges* viii., vii. 1), and there is every reason to believe that it is this tree that the sacred author wished to designate, for the Assyrian inscriptions inform us that the pine, and the cedar, were the most exquisite trees of Libanon.

But how can the word *algunmim* signify in this case the pine and in another the sandal? It is possible that the name of this tree has not come down to us with its true orthography; in Kings it is written *-almuggim*, and in Paralipomena, *algunmim*. Which is the true reading? We do not know. Must we really read *algunmim* in the account of the trees asked from Hiram? Again we do not know. But supposing that the primitive reading has come down to us, however doubtful this may be, examples are not wanting which prove that very different objects have been designated by the same word, when one of these objects has been foreign. It

is a universal law of language that one always designates the unknown by the known, and one gives to an animal or to a tree, which one sees for the first time, the name of the animal or tree that resembles it the most among those that are known. It is thus that the Greeks gave to the Egyptian *pehemout* the name of river-horse, *hippopotamus*, which we still give to it, and that the Romans, when they saw elephants for the first time, called them "oxen of Lucania." And, to cite an example from the same order of things as that which occupies us, the Greeks gave in a similar manner to an Egyptian tree the name of *sycamore*, or "fig-mulberry tree," although this tree is neither a fig-tree nor a mulberry-tree, but because its foliage resembles that of the mulberry-tree and its fruit that of the fig-tree. We call by the name of *sycamore* the same Egyptian tree, and, moreover, a tree of our country, quite different, a sort of maple, for the reason that it resembles the mulberry-tree in its foliage, although it produces no figs. So also, we call *acacia*, trees of various kinds. It is, therefore, certain that we can give one and the same name to trees of different species. This is explained through a general tendency of the human mind; we do not create words for every object; we always look among things for family resemblances, and we classify them in our mind by giving to them names analogous to that which appears to have a real analogy with it. Moreover, when the name is imported with the object, we unconsciously transform the exotic name to give to it an indigenous meaning and sound. We notice this especially among the Orientals, for whom the proper names are significant. The Arabs have modified more or less, wherever they have established themselves, the ancient names of localities when these did not offer to them some meaning in their own tongue. Thus of *Beth-lehem*, "house of bread," they have made *Beth-laham*, "house of flesh." Probably through an unconscious application of these principles, which rule the morphology of languages, the Hebrews had given the name of *alghummim* to either the trees of Libanon or to the trees of India, of which there is question here.

It is easy to explain the manner in which they reach this approximation. We indifferently give the same name to similar trees, although of a different species, as we have just seen. Certain species of pine were little known in Palestine; the sandal-tree was not known at all. Of the latter tree, the Hebrews saw only the wood, without its leaves, and such as it was transported in com-

merce. Now we distinguish to-day, and perhaps they also distinguished at that time, three kinds of sandal-wood; the white sandal, which is sold in small blocks, fragrant like perfume;—it is believed to be the sap-wood of the citrine sandal; the citrine sandal, which has a pale red color, and of which the Hindoos and Chinese make vases, little chests and various objects of marquetry; finally, the red sandal, a wood of peculiar color used in making fine cabinet-work and from which they also extract a red resinous coloring matter employed in dyeing. Did Salomon's fleet transport these three kinds of wood or only one? We do not know, and this is of no importance. We know for certain that it carried woods for cabinet-work, because they made musical instruments thereof (III. Ki. x. 12; II. Par. ix. 11), and it is enough to state that the different kinds of wood they used for this end had some analogy in color with that of the pine, which explains how the Hebrews could give the name *algum* to pine.

Another expression of Paralipomena is not less severely criticized. Just as they claim to discover here a botanical error, critics also pretend to find a geographical error in what Esdras says of the vessels destined for the commerce of Ophir. He describes them as "going to Tharsis" (II. Par. ix. 21; xx. 11). Yet these vessels started from Asiongaber, on the Red Sea; they could not go by that way to Tharsis, which is generally admitted to have been Tartessus in Spain. Some authors, indeed, have believed that the fleet had gone around Africa to accomplish this voyage, but this opinion is hardly credible. There is here a dispute about words of Holy Scripture as in the preceding case.

The explanation of the expression employed in Paralipomena again appears to us to be found in the customs of the language. Tharsis, rigorously speaking, designated Tartessus in Spain, but in the popular language, the name of the city whither the Phœnicians went to seek precious metals, had become that of all the countries where gold was found. Thus they called, by the name Tharsis, Ophir, which was very little known by the Israelites, like Tartessus itself. Hebraists are generally agreed in acknowledging that all great vessels were called "vessels of Tharsis," although they did not go to this city, just as the English call their large vessels *Indiamen*, although not all of them go to India. In the epoch when the author of Paralipomena wrote, the people were in the habit of calling Tharsis the place from whence

Salomon's fleet had brought gold, just as in Europe they sometimes call America West Indies. Both philosophers and scholars make use of this name like the rest of people, and Raynal entitled his most famous work: *Philosophic History of the Commerce of the Europeans in Both Indies*. Such expressions, inexact, if you will, in geographical language, are justified by the popular use, and one has no more right to reproach Esdras for calling Ophir Tharsis, than to accuse other inspired authors of a crime because they called Europe "the islands," or even for having given it the name of Cyprus. The Psalmist and Isaias said: *The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents (to the king) . . . The islands wait for me, and the ships of Tharsis (ships of the sea, says the Vulgate) in the beginning: that I may bring thy sons from afar: their silver and their gold with them* (Ps. lxxi. 10; Is. lx. 9) (Hebrew text).

Here the "islands" designate Europe or even all the countries bathed by the Mediterranean Sea, however improper this expression may be in the eyes of a geographer. Tharsis, which has "kings," certainly does not mean only the city of Tartessus, and here we may very well understand it as designating all the countries producing gold, Ophir included, because in these enumerations of the auriferous countries, Ophir is not expressly mentioned, although its place was naturally marked therein. But, be it as it may in regard to the latter point, the example drawn from the island of Cyprus is still more significant. It clearly shows how the geographical nomenclature came finally to embrace entire regions, after having been at first applied only to a restricted or well determined point. In Hebrew, the island of Cyprus is called *Kittim*. This name properly designates the inhabitants of Citium, one of the principal cities of the island. After a first extension, the name of this city was applied to the entire island (Gen. x. 4; Is. xxiii. 1, 12; Ezech. xxvii. 7). Then it was extended to all the countries situated on the west of Palestine and of Cyprus, so that, like the word "islands," it designated Europe and the western countries (Num. xxiv. 24; Jer. ii. 10; Dan. xxvii. 30). These examples, which could be multiplied, suffice to show the elasticity of geographical names, especially among the ancients, and to justify the name of Tharsis given to the country of Ophir by the author of Paralipomena.

COMPARED CHRONOLOGY OF THE KINGS OF JUDA AND ISRAEL

(48)

BIBLICAL DATES.	Year of the King of Juda preceding.	Duration of the reign.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	BEGINNING OF THE REIGN.			KINGS OF JUDA.	Duration of the reign.	Year of the King of Israel preceding.	BIBLICAL DATES.
				Petau.	Clinton,	Winer.				
3 Ki. xiv. 20	...	22	Jeroboam I.	975	976	975	Roboam	17	...	3 Ki. xiv. 21; 2 Par. xii. 13.
...	...	...	...	958	959	957	Abia	2	18	3 Ki. xv. 2; 2 Par. xiii. 2.
...	...	...	...	955	956	955	Asa	41	20	3 Ki. xv. 10; 2 Par. xvi. 13.
xv. 25	2	2	Nadab	954	955	954	...	...	...	...
xv. 33	3	24	Baasa	953	954	953	...	...	...	...
xvi. 8	26	2	Ela	930	930	930	...	...	...	...
xvi. 15	27	7 days	Zambri	929	930	928	...	...	...	...
xvi. 23	31	21	Amri	929	930	928	...	...	...	...
xvi. 29	38	22	Achab	917	919	918	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	912	915	914	Josaphat	25	4	3 Ki. xxii. 42; 2 Par. xx. 31.
xxii. 52	17	2	Ochozias	898	896	897	...	...	...	...
4 Ki. iii. 1	18	12	Joram	896	895	896	...	...	...	...
...	...	...	...	889	891	889	Joram	8	5	4 Ki. viii. 17; 2 Par. xx. 31.
...	...	...	...	885	884	885	Ochozias	1	12	4 Ki. viii. 26; 2 Par. xxii. 2.
x. 36	...	28	Jehu	884	883	884	Athalia	6	...	4 Ki. xi. 3; 2 Par. xxii. 12.
...	...	...	...	878	877	878	Joas	40	7	4 Ki. xii. 1; 2 Par. xxiv. 1.
xiii. 1	33	17	Joachaz	856	855	856	...	...	...	...

xiii. 10	37	16	Joas	840	839	840	Amazias	29	2	4 Ki. xiv. 1; 2 Par. xxvi. 1.
xiv. 23	15	41	Jeroboam II.	838	837	838				
				824	823	825				
				809	808	809	Ozias or Azarias	52	27	4 Ki. xv. 2; 2 Par. xxvi. 3.
		11	Interregnum							
xv. 8	38	6 mos.	Zacharias	772	771	772				
xv. 13		1 mo.	Sellum	772	770	771				
xv. 17	39	10	Manahem	771	770	771				
xv. 23	50	2	Phaceia	761	759	760				
xv. 27	52	20	Phace	759	757	758				
				757	756	758	Joatham	16	2	4 Ki. xv. 33; 2 Par. xxvii. 1.
				741	741	741	Achaz	16	17	4 Ki. xvi. 2; 2 Par. xxviii. 1.
			2d Interregnum							
xvii. 1	12	9	Osee	729	730	729				
				727	726	725	Ezechias	29	3	4 Ki. xviii. 2; 2 Par. xxix. 1.
xviii. 10	6		Taking of Samaria	721	721	721				
				698	697	696	Manasse	55		4 Ki. xxi. 1; 2 Par. xxxiii. 11.
				643	642	641	Amon	2		4 Ki. xxi. 19; 2 Par. xxxiii. 21.
				641	640	639	Josias	31		4 Ki. xxii. 1; 2 Par. xxxiv. 1.
				610	609	609	Joachaz	3 mos.		4 Ki. xxiii. 31; 2 Par. xxxvi. 2.
				610	609	609	Joakim	11		4 Ki. xxiii. 36; 2 Par. xxxvi. 5.
							Jechonias or Joachim	3 mos.		2 Par. xxxvi. 9.
				599	598	598	Sedecias	11		4 Ki. xxiv. 18; 2 Par. xxxvi. 11.
				589	587	586	Taking of Jerusalem			4 Ki. xxv. 8; Ju. xxxix. 2.

CHAPTER IV

*SAMUEL, DAVID, KING JOSIAS, AND THE HIGH PRIEST
HELCIAS*

I. SAMUEL.—“Samuel,” says Reuss, “is unquestionably the personage most in evidence and most worthy of attention of the historian, between the times of Moses and David.” But Rationalists have many objections to make against him. First, they reproach him with having been an ambitious man, and with having been unjust towards Saul because the latter wished to exercise himself the power which the prophet desired to keep, committing it only nominally to the creature of his choice.

If Samuel had been really an ambitious man, nothing would oblige us to defend him, for the Scripture nowhere tells us that he was without passion and sin, but this great man was really actuated by noble and disinterested motives. Sacred history tells us that he conferred the royal unction upon Saul by the direction of heaven, and the divine call was subsequently confirmed by lot. The prophet thus placed at the head of the people a young man whom he had not known before, who was neither of his family nor of his tribe. Prudent and skillful man, as Samuel certainly was, had he been moved by personal interest, he would not have called an unknown stranger to the royal power.

Later on Samuel was at variance with Saul, but the wrong was on the side of the king, who disobeyed the orders of God. Through a double violation of the divine will, he did not wait for Samuel until the day prescribed for offering a sacrifice to the Lord, and moreover, he offered it himself, although he was not of the tribe of Benjamin and not of the sacerdotal race (II. Ki. xiii. 8–14). The prophet, charged with having both the law and the authority with which he was invested respected, could not tolerate this conduct or shut his eyes to this usurpation of the civil power. If he had yielded on this occasion, if he had not had the face of adamant with which later on his successors spoke (Ezech. iii. 8; cf. Is. xlviii. 4), it would have been over with the providential mission of the people of Israel; instead of being the theocratic people and the preservers of monotheism, they would have differed in nothing from

the tribes that surrounded them. They would have become idolaters like their neighbors and their name perhaps would be no longer known to-day in the history of the world. Besides, it was not without pain that Samuel saw the rejection of one whom he himself had anointed king (I. Ki. xv. 11). He did not cease to bewail his reprobation (xv. 35), so that God might be said to have rebuked him (xvi. 1).

They reproach Samuel not only with his conduct towards Saul, but they also accuse him of cruelty towards Agag, King of the Amalekites. Saul, contrary to the order of God, having spared the life of the chief of the enemies whom he had defeated, Samuel rebuked him for this disobedience, and caused this monarch to be put to death whom the King of Israel had spared in the hope of a rich ransom. Of this Voltaire writes:

"A priest . . . cutting a king into pieces as we cut a chicken at table! Doing with his own hand what would make a hangman tremble! Anybody reading this passage is penetrated with horror. . . . We can regard the death of King Agag as a real sacrifice. Saul had made the King of the Amalekites a prisoner of war and had received him kindly; but the priest Samuel had given him orders to spare nothing. . . . In this fatal episode, we can see devotedness, a priest and a victim, hence it was a sacrifice. . . . Therefore, among the Jews there were human sacrifices. . . . I admit that I cannot help seeing a real sacrifice in the death of this good King Agag. I say first that he was good, for he was as fat as an ortolan; and physicians tell us that corpulent people are always good humored. Then I say that he was sacrificed, for first he was vowed to the Lord. . . . Here I see a victim and a priest. I see Samuel, who says prayers with Saul and then makes the captive king walk between them and cuts him into pieces with his own hands. If this is not a sacrifice, there never has been any. Yes, Gentlemen, with his own hands: *in frusta concidit eum.*" (*Un Chretien contre six Juifs.*)

It may be doubted whether Voltaire was *penetrated with horror*, when he represents to us this good King Agag "fat like an ortolan." However, if it were true that Samuel had chopped the King of the Amalekites into pieces, this manner of putting him to death would have been very cruel. But there is nothing of the

kind; Agag perishes by a death worthy of a warrior, that is, by the sword. The author of *One Christian Against Six Jews* quotes the version of the Vulgate: *in frustra concidit eum*, but, as a good critic, he ought to have examined whether the translation had rigorously given the meaning of the original. In this passage, the Hebrew runs: "he killed him with a sword." Did the prophet strike him himself, or was his order executed by another? The latter hypothesis is possible, but it matters little. Besides, Samuel was no priest, as his calumniator repeats with evident pleasure; he was only a Levite. As to the justice of the treatment inflicted upon Agag, that is clear from the text, and one has to distort it purposely, as Voltaire does, to mistake the truth. The inspired author reports the words of Samuel which inform us that the Amalekite King was put to death in punishment for his cruelties (I. Ki. xv. 39); he underwent the fate which he had made so many others undergo. It was only through covetousness that Saul had spared him (xv. 9-19). In our days, as in the last century, our opponents would regard the punishment inflicted upon Agag as a sacrifice offered to the true God, but there was nothing in its purpose that resembled the immolation of a victim offered to the Lord.

II. DAVID.—Among the personages of the Old Testament who are the object of universal veneration, there is none that has been more abused by modern infidels than King David. This great man was not always a saint; there are stains on his life, but he effaced them by his penance and he is one of the most beautiful examples of God's mercy towards "contrite and humble sinners" (Ps. l. 19). No matter; Rationalism cannot pardon him for having been one of the most illustrious faithful of the Old Testament and one of the chief instruments of which God made use to prepare, a long time beforehand, the advent of Christianity; it seeks to lower and degrade him. None has gone further in his hatred towards David than Renan; he surpasses all his infidel friends in the violence and brutality of his attacks on this holy man. The historic sympathies of infidels are something remarkable. Renan labored his whole lifetime, on the one hand, to rehabilitate Satan, Cain, Saul, and Judas Iscariot, and on the other, to degrade David, St. John, and St. Paul. An irresistible attraction carried him towards the former and separated him from the latter.

Edward Reuss, although a Rationalist himself, points out correctly, several characteristics which justify the glory of David, and he thus condemns the excesses of Renan. But even this author is far from rendering complete justice to the founder of the Hebrew monarchy, to the pious king who conceived the project of raising a temple to Jehovah in Jerusalem, and who organized with such splendor the liturgical chant and public worship; to the inspired poet who, in spite of all one may say against him, was "the sweet singer of Israel" (II. Ki. xxiii. 1), the author of the most beautiful Psalms. To attempt to rob David of the glory of having composed a part of our sacred chants is one of the most foolish undertakings of modern infidelity. If David did not compose any Psalms, there is not a single fact certain in the history of the past; Pindar has written no Odes and Virgil is not the author of the *Æneid*. However, even though David had not left us any poetical composition, the Church would not have the less right to consider him as a saint. Undoubtedly the Psalms attest in a striking manner his sentiments of faith and piety, but his history alone is sufficient to show him a model worthy in several respects of our imitation. The first king of Jerusalem permitted himself, it is true, to fall into deplorable faults, he even committed great crimes, but he made most generous reparation, and it was by his repentance, in humbling himself under the hand of God and acknowledging that he was justly punished, that he was able to draw from his own fall a means to raise himself higher, and thus to teach all future sinners the merit of penance and the value of an humble and sincere expiation. If it is said that David did not merit the title of saint by a constantly irreproachable life, the statement is correct; but the Church, which considers penance as a second innocence and knows the extent of God's mercy as well as the frailty of man, bestows the title of saint on the converted sinner as well as on the just man who has never fallen, on St. Paul, St. Augustine, and David, as on St. Louis and St. John; on Mary Magdalen as on St. Agnes. As to the Scripture, it calls David *the man according to God's own heart* (I. Ki. xiii. 14), certainly not to approve of the faults which he might commit later on, but because he should nevertheless faithfully fulfil the mission which Providence had assigned to him. Scripture condemns very clearly the sins of the son of Isai, and we must not regard its words as an eulogy of his

whole conduct and the approbation of all his acts. The prophet Nathan announces to the guilty king that in punishment of his crime he shall lose the son which Bethsabee had given to him and, a still harder chastisement, that his beloved son Absalon will revolt against him (II. Ki. xii. 10-12). God on account of his repentance, pardons him the sin committed, but the expiation thereof shall be a public one, in order to repair the scandal (xii. 13-14). Is it possible to manifest in a more evident manner how God blames and condemns His servant when his conduct is reprehensible?

For the rest, in spite of his violent passions and in spite of the most greivous faults, David nevertheless merited the eulogies which Scripture bestows on him, and, after it all, Jewish and Christian antiquity. God, who sees the hearts of men, saw a vast difference between the dispositions of Saul and those of his successor. Both became unfaithful to Him, but whilst David returned to God with generosity and sincerity, Saul never really repented of his faults, and even when he asked pardon for them, it was only through egotism and self-interest. One must have lost all religious sense to confound Saul with David, and especially to place the son of Isai below the son of Cis. Their history contains a characteristic feature which represents both of them in an analogous situation and makes the difference of their dispositions appear most strikingly.

When Saul had violated the order of God in sparing Agog, King of the Amalekites, the prophet Samuel reproached him in the name of the Lord for his disobedience. When David had become guilty of adultery and homicide, the prophet sought him out in the name of God and explained to him the horrible extent of his crimes. In these two circumstances, both kings answered with the same word: *Peccavi*, "I have sinned;" but this word did not have the same meaning in their mouths. In the one, it came from the heart, and expressed a true and sincere contrition for the fault committed; in the other, it was only from his lips and had only one end in view: to preserve his crown. David obeys a movement of faith, a supernatural motive; Saul has only human views and self-interest. *I have sinned*, he says to Samuel . . . *but now bear, I beseech thee, my sin, and return with me. . . . Honor me now before the ancients of Israel and before my people* (I. Ki. xv. 24-30). Thus in making his *mea culpa*, Saul only thinks of himself and his temporal interests.

How different are the sentiments of David! He only thinks of God whom he has offended, he humbles himself before Him: *I have sinned against the Lord*, he says, and adds not another word (II. Ki. xii. 13). Whilst Saul desires to do violence to Samuel, and tears away a part of his cloak in order to retain him by force, David accepts without complaint the terrible chastisements which Nathan has just announced to him in the name of the Lord, and he acknowledges the justice of the expiation to which he is to be subjected, saying only: *I have sinned against the Lord*. How can one be astonished that the Scripture and religious men of all times have had such a high idea of David, and acknowledged the justness of the condemnation of Saul? Let us reproach, then, if you wish, David for the faults and crimes of which he rendered himself guilty; in this he was human and reprehensible; but let us also acknowledge his great qualities, and particularly that spirit of faith and religion, by which he so nobly raised himself from his fall.

III. KING JOSIAS AND THE HIGH-PRIEST HELCIAS.—The Fourth Book of Kings (xxii. 8–20) and the Second Book of Paralipomena (xxxiv. 14–33) relate that in the eighteenth year of the reign of Josias, King of Juda, the high-priest Helcias found the Book of Deuteronomy in the temple of Jerusalem. Paralipomena in relating the same facts, only adds some minor details, among which we notice the following; *The Book of Law found by Helcias was the book written by the hand of Moses* (xxxiv. 14). Rationalists do not question the main facts of the sacred account. But if infidelity, according to its ordinary tactics, admits the accuracy of the sacred account, it is to pervert it, and because it expects to derive therefrom some argument against the traditional belief. About the middle of the last century, an English deist Samuel Parvish, maintained the hypothesis that Deuteronomy had been written in the eighth century B. C., and that it was the work of a skillful forger, the high-priest Helcias. He claimed that he based his hypothesis on the passages noted above. His opinion was welcomed by Rationalists, and a great number of critics to-day establish their theories concerning the origin of the Pentateuch upon the ideas of Parvish.

Infidels, generally, accept the account of the Book of Kings, but only what pleases them and with the view to conclude therefrom

that Deuteronomy was written at that time and had for its author Helcias or his associates. By what right do they divide the above passage and regard a part as true, and the rest as false? Why do they accept the testimony of the sacred author, telling that Deuteronomy was really presented to Josias, and why do they reject the testimony of the same writer, affirming that the Book of Moses was "found," and not invented and published by a forger? Solely to maintain their preconceived opinions and to deny the antiquity of the Pentateuch.

Every other consideration is subordinated to this object, which for infidels it is all-important to establish. One of the principal abettors of this theory, Graf, had asserted in 1866 that the Jehovistic part and *a fortiore* the Elohist part of the Pentateuch were known to the authors of Deuteronomy, but that the latter had no knowledge of the legal part. Kuenen, a Professor at Leyden, who also rejected the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, answered that the accounts of facts and the laws were so intermingled that they cannot be separated from one another, and told Graf to extend his hypothesis to the accounts of facts as well as the laws. The latter promptly complied with this suggestion; he overthrew the order of his system, that which was anterior became posterior, without any other reason than that of the needs of the cause, and from this has sprung the present theory, adopted by Kuenen and Reuss according to which Deuteronomy existed before the other books of the Pentateuch.

However, according to the account of the Books of Kings and Paralipomena, it is not less certain that the Pentateuch existed before Helcias and Josias. In order that a book may be "found," it must have existed before its finding; in order that this book found may be recognized as the "Book of the Law," this book of the law must have been already known.

But, they say, if the Mosaic Law was known, why did the discovery of this book produce such a commotion at court and in the city of Jerusalem? Because then they read it with attention, after having neglected it for too long a time during which it had been lost sight of. We find an analogous fact several centuries later. When Esdras caused the Law to be read to the people (II. Esd. viii.), "the assembled Israelites shed tears. Esdras and the Levites console them and encourage them to rejoice. On the next

day they seek to understand what Esdras had read to them on the previous day. They study the Thora which he read, as a text that was new and unknown to them." It is M. Renan who expresses himself thus. However, they had long known Deuteronomy at least. Well! What occurred under Josias is not less surprising nor less true than that which took place under Esdras. Besides, it is impossible not to acknowledge that the Mosaic law and the history contained in the first books of the Pentateuch were known before Josias and Helcias.

A convincing proof that Deuteronomy was not composed under the kings, at the time of Josias, is that it contains, not only one law, but several laws which would have no meaning at that time. Thus, the Israelites receive the order to exterminate Amalek, after taking possession of the land of Chanaan. Under Josias, Amalek had long disappeared from the scene of history (Deut. xxv. 17-19; cf. I. Ki. xiv. 48; xv. 2, etc.; xxvii. 8; xxx. 1, etc.; I Par. iv. 43). They were also commanded to destroy the Chanaanites; but at this time they were no longer of any importance and could not have been a menace to the Israelites (Deut. xx. 16-18). A law is promulgated against Ammon and Moab in favor of Edom. It is the reverse of the dispositions which prevailed in Israel in regard to the Idumeans during the last years of the kings, when the descendants of Esau were regarded as the most implacable enemies and the most deserving of hatred on the part of the children of Jacob (Deut. xxiii. 3, 4, 7, 8; cf. Jer. xliii. 47; xlix. 6, 17, 18; Ps. cxxxvii. 7; etc.). The legislator gives counsels for the choice of a king, supposing that the people might desire some day to have a king. How could counsels of this kind have been given several centuries after the election of Saul (Deut. xvii. 14-20)? What is said of the organization of the army, could not have been written under the domination of a king (xx. 9). Funeral practices and mourning fashions, which are forbidden by the Law, were, on the contrary, permitted at the time of Josias and later; hence, it was not in the time of Josias that this prohibition could have been formulated (Deut. xiv. 1-2; cf. Jer. vii. 29; xli. 5).

That Deuteronomy was composed only after the preceding books of the Pentateuch, is known from Deuteronomy itself. We read therein that the Levites should not have heritage among their brethren, because Jehovah was their heritage, as "He had told

them.* Where had He told them? In the Book of Numbers, in that part of the law which contemporary criticism calls Elohist and alleges to be posterior to the Captivity (Deut. xviii. 2; cf. Num. xviii. 20-23). It is prescribed for the people to observe in the treatment of leprosy all that the priests shall teach them, as it had been commanded to them. We read this ordinance in two chapters of Leviticus, but nowhere else (Deut. xxiv. 8-9; Lev. xiii., xiv.). Numbers ordain the establishment of six cities of refuge in the land of Chanaan. In Deuteronomy, Moses, in order to execute this command, chose three to the east of Jordan, and he arranges for the selection of the other three to the west of that river, after the conquest of the country (Num. xxxv; Deut. iv. 41; xix. 1-10). What is said of the clean and unclean animals in Deuteronomy presupposes also what is said of them in Leviticus. All these points are incontestible, which even Renan is forced to admit. Hence, it is supremely unjust to impute to the high-priest Helcias, to Josias, or to their contemporaries, a fraud which they did not commit.

CHAPTER V

THE BOOK OF TOBIAS

THE Book of Tobias, like those of Judith and Esther, has for its principal end to show the protection of Providence over Israel, the first and the latter, in foreign countries, the second, in Palestine, at a time which it is quite difficult to determine, but which is posterior to the ruin of Samaria and probably anterior to the Babylonian captivity. A certain number of heterodox commentators, and even a few Catholics, struck by the tendency of the accounts, where it is manifest that it was the purpose of the author to excite especially the confidence of his compatriots in God's help in the midst of tribulations, drew the conclusion, at least for Tobias and Judith, that they are not histories, but pious romances. We shall inquire and see what we have to believe about the character of these books and solve the objections formulated against them, commencing with the Book of Tobias.

This book presents itself to us under the form of a real history. The author writes like an historian, not like an inventor of fictions. He makes known to us the origin of his hero and his genealogy; he gives us all the chronological and geographical details which historians are accustomed to give. Besides, it is only recently that this narrative has not been considered historical. What really prevents most of the critics from accepting the existence of the two Tobias' and the miraculous events of their biography, is this very miraculous feature. For us, on the contrary, the miracle and the supernatural intervention of God and of His angels are no sufficient cause for denying or questioning events which Providence judged proper to surround with prodigious circumstances.

Aside from the miraculous rôle which the Angel Raphael plays in the journey of the young Tobias, we cannot allege anything against the credibility of the whole book. That miracle once admitted, all the objections which are brought against the biblical narrative are easily solved, provided we remember that the original text is lost, and that the versions which have come down to us are more or less imperfect. Fortunately the very diversity of the ancient translations is a help here. It permits us to answer easily the objections of criticism. The *Codex Sinaiticus*, a Greek manuscript of the Old and New Testament, dating from the fourth century, and found on Mount Sinai, contains in particular a version whose contents are very precious. It is according to the text which the manuscript of Sinai gives us that the version of Tobias in the ancient Italic has been made, and used in the Latin Church before the adoption of our present Vulgate.

One of the most embarrassing difficulties of the text of the Vulgate arises from the location of the home of Raguel, father of Sara, and relative of Tobias, at Rages, a city of the Medes (Tob. iii. 7; vi. 6), and nevertheless it states that the angel Raphael departs from the city where Raguel dwelt to go to Rages, in order to reclaim from Gabelus the money the latter owes to Tobias (ix. 3, 6). Hence, there is here a contradiction. To reconcile these statements, two cities of Rages, both situated in Media, have been imagined; but their existence does not rest upon any proof. Geography knows of only one city of this name, that which is at present called Rei. It is situated at the foot of the mountain chain of the Elbruz, not

far from the actual site of Teheran, and remains of ancient fortifications can still be seen there. To go from Assyria to Rages, we must pass Ecbatana. It was in this latter city, and not at Rages, that Raguel lived, as the Greek manuscripts teach us, which thus rightly correct the faulty reading of the Vulgate.

Ecbatana, now called Hamadan, was the capital of Media. Founded by Dejoces and surrounded by seven walls of different heights and colors, it served as a summer residence for the Achemenide kings, and later on for the Parthian kings. Situated in the midst of high mountains, its climate is very cold; the city lies about 5,400 feet above the level of the sea.

All the texts agree that Gabelus, the debtor of Tobias, lived in the city of Rages, and it is thither that the angel Raphael went to collect the debt. They pretended that the sacred writer committed an error here, and that in the epoch in which he places Tobias, about 700 B. C., Rages had not yet come into existence, because Strabo reports that this city was built by Seleucus Nicator a long time after the death of Tobias, that is, 300 B. C.

The objection is not well founded. Strabo expresses himself improperly; he means to say that Seleucus rebuilt and repaired the city of Rages. The proof that the Greek geographer understood it thus, is that he teaches us that Seleucus substituted for the ancient name of Rages that of Europos. Besides we have positive proofs for the existence of Rages before the time of the Seleucides. Alexander the Great sojourned therein five days in 331 (Arrien, *De Exped. Alexand.* iii. 20), about thirty years before Seleucus mounted the throne. The Zend-Avesta mentions it as a very ancient city, and Darius, son of Hystaspes, names it in his inscriptions.

The distance from Ecbatana to Rages is considerable. Arrien states that Alexander, pursuing Darius, reached Rages on the eleventh day after his leaving Ecbatana. A traveler of our day who knows these localities well, Madame Dieulafoy, writes: "The distance from Teheran (Rages) to Hamadan (Ecbatana) is about sixty farsaks or parasangs, *i. e.* about 316 miles. A caravan, composed of strong horses or mules, makes each day six farsaks; camels under the same condition make from four to five farsaks. From Teheran to Saneh, on horses from the royal stables, it required three days and a half to make the twenty-two farsaks which separate these two cities. If the beasts could have con-

tinued this gait, we would have reached Hamadan in nine days, but there is no Persian camel that could have followed us. My impression is that Alexander, pursuing Darius, must have hastened his march with remarkable rapidity in order to cross within eleven days the countries comprised between Ecbatana and Rages, the territory being very uneven and interspersed in places with high mountains. It may have been that the conqueror advanced with a selected troop, and left to his lieutenants the care of the main body of the army who were led onward by a less fatiguing route." (Letter of January 31st, 1889.)

The angel Raphael, traveling with camels and servants (ix. 6), must, therefore, have needed more than twenty days to go to Rages and to bring back Gabelus. They have made the attempt to draw from the length of this voyage another objection against the sacred account; they suppose that the writer did not know the distance between these two cities. But this supposition is without foundation, for most of the texts, and in particular the Vulgate (ix. 6), do not indicate the duration of the journey. They desired, it is true, to fix its length indirectly, by stating that the marriage feasts continued only two weeks (viii. 23), that they commenced before the departure for Rages, and that they were not yet ended on the arrival of Gabelus, and that, consequently, the voyage of the angel had taken less than fourteen days. We answer: the text does not prevent the supposition that the feasts were delayed, in order that Raphael and Gabelus might take part in them, and it insinuates that the absence of Tobias lasted longer than it would have, if he had gone to Rages (x. 1), without stopping for his marriage with the daughter of Raguel. His father-in-law did all he could to prolong his sojourn at Ecbatana, and they celebrated probably the solemn feasts only after the return of Raphael to Rages.

The Greek text, as published in the ordinary editions, furnishes matter for other objections, which are all answered by the *Codex Sinaiticus*. We read at the end of the book (xiv. 10) an allusion to the history of Esther and Aman. The elder Tobias reminds his son, as a thing passed, of the treatment which Achiacharus (As-suerus) made the persecutors of the Jews undergo. This is clearly an anachronism, because the events reported in the Book of Esther occurred only long after the death of Tobias. The *Codex Sinai-*

ticus, as also our Vulgate, does not speak of Aman; hence it is an error that we read his name in the Septuagint.

As for Achiacharus, in whom they desired to see Assuerus, King of the Persians, because he is named with Aman, he is in reality Cyaxares, King of Media, the conqueror and destroyer of Ninive. The text of Sinai is very precise and very exact on this point. In the final verse it says: *And (Tobias the son) before his death learned yet the ruin of Ninive, and he saw the prisoners who were led to Media, and who had been taken by Achiacharus, King of the Medes* (Tob. xiv. 15, *Codex Sinaiticus*).

The latter passage has also been altered in the printed form of the Septuagint. It gives rise to a new objection, in substituting wrongfully the better known name of Nabuchodonosor for that of Cyaxares. *And (Tobias) heard relating, before his death; the capture of Ninive which was effected by Nabuchodonosor and Asyerus* (Tob. xiv. 15, Septuagint). Nabuchodonosor may have assisted in the ruin of Ninive, in the army of his father Nabopolassar, ally of Cyaxares, but the taking of the capital of Assyria cannot be attributed to him. The *Codex Sinaiticus* corrects this error which has entered into the printed texts of the Greek version.

All the texts speak of the demon *Asmodeus*, and what they state of him appears incredible or even absurd, to rationalistic critics. They say, in the first place, that it has been borrowed from Mazdeism.

It is possible that the name was borrowed, indeed, from Mazdean belief, by the author of Tobias, who lived in Media, but if this were really the case, it was only the name that was interpolated, for the biblical demon personifies impurity, which the *Ashmo daeva* of the Avesta does not represent at all. Besides, the borrowing is far from being demonstrated and the similarity of sound between Asmodeus and Ashmo daeva may be purely accidental, for the name demon is readily explained in Hebrew, when it is understood as a derivation from the root *samad*, "the one who destroys," a terminology which is precisely equivalent to our familiar expression, "the spirit of perdition."

But, whatever there may be as to the origin of the name of Asmodeus, what is more important, is the conduct of the demon. He, who is a spirit, loves a woman. He is expelled from the odor emitted from the burnt liver of a fish and is banished into a desert

of Upper Egypt. How can any one fail to recognize in all this a mere fable, say the infidels?

In the first place the sacred writer does not state that Asmodeus loved Sara, the daughter of Raguel; it is Tobias the son who, in the Greek text—for the Vulgate does not say it—comes to this conclusion, because the demon had caused the death of the seven husbands of Sara. Now, this conclusion was unfounded, for it follows clearly from the words of Raphael to the young Tobias that the first husbands of the daughter of Raguel were struck by the demon on account of their incontinence (Tob. vi. 16–18). In the second place, when it is said that Asmodeus was driven away by the smoke of a burnt liver of a fish (viii. 2), this signifies, not that the liver had this virtue in itself, but that God contributed this virtue to this material object, as He has given to the baptismal water the power to drive away the demon. Finally, when it is said that Asmodeus is banished to the desert of Upper Egypt (viii. 3), this phraseology must be understood simply, according to the explanation given by St. Augustine, in the sense that “his power to do injury is taken away from him by the angel” Raphael, and that he was removed from the family of Tobias and Raguel, and banished to a place outside of which it is forbidden him to exercise his malevolent power.

We have already remarked that they reproach the Book of Tobias with being tinctured with Mazdean belief, by borrowing from the latter the demon Asmodeus. They also pretend that it took from this belief what Raphael says: *I am one of the seven angels, who stand before the Lord* (Tob. xii. 15). These are, they assure us, the Amesha-cpentas or Amschaspands of Zoroastrism.

“An inadvertance alone,” remarks M. de Harlez, “could admit this assimilation to pass. It is solely founded upon the number seven. Now this number is in no manner common to the two groups in question, If the Amesha-cpentas are counted alone, they are only six. If Ahura-Mazda is added to them, we have to count also Jehovah among the number of the archangels, who are then eight and not seven. Moreover, the Amesha-cpentas, to be seven, must be raised to the same rank as their creator, although remaining less powerful than he. Never did a biblical writer conceive such a thought, or rank among the same choir Jehovah and the heavenly spirits. He describes them as dependent ministers,

keeping themselves always ready before the Lord to receive His orders. Raphael refuses for himself all honor and gratitude. These latter traits tell sufficiently what distance separates the Ameshaçpentas from the seven biblical spirits and prove the irreducibility of their nature. The number seven was sacred to the Hebrews, outside of all exterior influence."

CHAPTER VI

THE BOOK OF JUDITH

SINCE the time of Luther, who declared that the Book of Judith was not historical, Protestants, except a few, have adopted his opinion. A very small number of Catholics have followed the opinion of Protestants, notably Jahn, Movers, and Scholz.

According to Movers, the author of the Book of Judith desired to give to his brethren the following lesson: "As long as the Jewish people will remain faithful to God, they will be capable of resisting the most powerful nations of the earth. In order to render this more sensible, he had to represent a dreadful enemy of the Jews in a period when the people of Jehovah were still faithful and devoted to Him. Since the history of the past did not offer anything similar in his own country, he borrows from the period anterior to the Captivity, the conquering Nabuchodonosor, such as the Book of Daniel depicts him, and he represented the Jewish people such as it had become after the return from captivity."

Scholz, in a lecture delivered November 11, 1884, before the Historic-Philological Society of Wurzburg, also denied the historical character of Judith. According to him, this book is certainly inspired, but it is not a history, it is a prophecy. The events it relates are impossible, and, moreover, there is no moment of sacred history wherein we can place them; they cannot have taken place either under the minority of Josias or during the captivity of Manasses. The confusion of personal geographical names is such that we cannot help believing that it was done intentionally on the part of the author, who otherwise appears to have been a well-instructed man. Judith is the Israel of the New Testament, the

Christian Church, a widow and without children; Achior (brother of the light) is the converted Gentile; Bethulia, the house of God, is the Holy Land; the return from captivity is the conversion to the faith; the campaign of Holofernes is the campaign of Gog in Ezechiel; Israel—Judith triumphs, with the help of its God, over all its enemies. This prophecy was written in the time of the Seleucid kings.

It is true that the Book of Judith, as Scholz maintains, might be inspired, even were it not relating a real history, but tradition considers this writing not only as inspired, but regards it also historical. This is the teaching of the Fathers. Until Luther, the unanimity was complete, and, in spite of the discordant voices heard since that time, Catholic theologians of our day admit, like those of former times, that Judith did really exist. Hence, we can still say with Richard Simon, that this is "the most general and most approved opinion." It is certain that the author gives us his account as a real and true one, because, to quote only two characteristics, he assures us that the descendants of Achior lived in his time among the Jews (Judith xiv. 6) and that they also celebrated in his days an annual feast in commemoration of the victory of Judith. Consequently, we can contest his testimony only in so far as we are capable of discovering in his writing proofs of the fictitious character one wishes to attribute to him. Let us now inquire whether the objections brought forward against the book are sufficient to destroy the traditional belief.

The main accusation made against the Book of Judith is that it is replete with historical and geographical errors.

It is certain and acknowledged by all that the text offers in this respect real difficulties, but we must remark that we meet with similar difficulties in all the ancient writings, where, like here, the proper names have been frequently disfigured and altered, so that we cannot draw therefrom any legitimate conclusion against the reality of the facts which they relate. In the Book of Judith, the difficulties of this kind are quite numerous, because the number of proper names, of both men and places, enumerated therein, are quite numerous. To recognize the primitive reading is sometimes possible, but not always. The original text, which, according to the avowal of all, was Chaldean or Hebrew, is lost. The different versions, both Greek and Latin, which have come

down to us, all contain errors and do not agree. More than once it happens that none has preserved the true name. Thus the city of Tarsus (in Cilicia) has become in the Vulgate Tharsis (in Spain); in the Greek, it is even less discernible, for here it has been transformed into Rassis (ii. 13); the river Chaboras is changed in the Greek into Abrona, and in the Vulgate into Mambre (ii. 14); the river Eulaeus, preserved correctly in the Syriac version, is known in the Vulgate under the name of Jadason, and in the Greek it takes a false name, that of another river, the Hydaspes (i. 6). Certainly, we can regard as errors all these names changed or altered, but they are errors for which the copyists alone are responsible, and we have no right to impute them to the original author. The very diversity of names in the different versions proves that the cause of these errors is the geographical ignorance of those who transcribed them. All the false denominations of places one may point out in the Book of Judith prove, therefore, nothing against its historic reality.

It is claimed, it is true, that there is a geographical name, the most important of the account, that of Bethulia, which could not have been altered and which alone is sufficient to establish that all is fictitious in Judith, both the personages and the facts, because that city itself, the site of which has never been discovered, is a pure fiction.

It is not proved at all, whatever the contradictors may say, that Bethulia is a fiction. Several modern scholars believe they have discovered its real site. Victor Guerin, in particular, has indicated that of Sanur, and his opinion has found great favor; but whether this identification is correct or not, it is incontestable that there have been in Palestine many other cities whose sites are completely unknown, but the existence of which is admitted beyond question. Bethulia, they say is named nowhere else in the Scripture. True, but Nazareth, Capharnaum, Bethsaida, Corozain are not named in the Old Testament, and appear only in the New Testament. There are even localities, like Bether—which, according to Renan, might be the Bethulia of the Book of Judith—whose names we read neither in the Old nor in the New Testament. The learned are not even agreed as to their situation; thus Guerin and Renan place Bether in Judea, south of Jerusalem; the famous explorer of the Holy Land, Robison, places it, on the

contrary, in Samaria; nevertheless, no one maintains that Bether did not exist or that the false Messiah Barcochebas did not hold out there, during three years, against the Roman legions under the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 135). In reality, the geographical descriptions of the Book of Judith are very exact, even for the most remote countries of Palestine, whenever ancient documents furnish us the means of verifying them. It is thus that the description of Ecbatana by the Israelitic author is confirmed by what we read in the *Zend-Avesta*:

"Arphaxad," the Book of Judith tells us, "surrounded Ecbatana with stone walls three cubits wide and six cubits long, and he raised the walls to a height of seventy cubits and their thickness was fifty cubits. He flanked the gates with towers, one hundred cubits high; their foundations were sixty cubits wide. He also constructed gates; they arose to a height of seventy cubits; their width was forty cubits, for the exit of his troops and for putting his foot-soldiers into battle array." (Judith i. 1-4; Greek text.)

Behold now the description of Ecbatana, in the *Zend-Avesta*. Zemschid, it is said there, "raised a Var or fortress, sufficiently large, built of hewn stones; here he gathered a numerous population and supplied the surroundings with troops for their use. From the large fortress he caused water to flow in abundance. In the Var or fortress he raised a magnificent palace, surrounded by walls, and divided into several distinct divisions; there was no elevated point therein, neither in the front nor back of it, that could come and dominate the fortress." The two texts, while different in manner of expression, agree in substance.

The geographical objections alleged against the Book of Judith, therefore, do not prove that this book is a fiction. The historical objections prove this neither. A first objection is drawn from the passage, just quoted and in which it is said that Arphaxad, King of the Medes, surrounded Ecbatana with walls. Now, no King of the Medes seems to have borne this name.

Arphaxad is very probably Phraorte, whose name can still be recognized in its Hebrew dress. The kings of Media always bore Turanian names, whose pronunciation and, so to speak, formation were quite different from those of the Semitic and Aryan lan-

guages; whence it resulted that the transcription of these names into foreign tongues changed them considerably. The Cyaxares of the Greek is called in the inscription of Behistun Uvaksatara and, according to Ctesias, whom Oppert approves, he is called Astibaras. From this example, it can be seen, that the modifications of proper nouns in Scripture are not such an extraordinary fact as it might appear at first sight. The Persian form of Phraorte was Fravartis. In the Babylonian (Semitic) text of the inscription of Bedhistun, he is called Parruvartis and in the Medic text Pirruvartis. In Diodor of Sicily he has become Artynes. The Semitics could not pronounce two initial consonants without the help of a vowel intercalated between these two consonants, as in Parruvatis, or placed before the first consonant, as in *Ahasveros* (Assuerus), name of Chschaarscha (Xerxes) which explains to us the *a* placed at the head of Arphaxad. The name of Arphaxad being known in the Hebrew language (Gen. x. 22, etc.), the name of Phraorte, under its Persian or Medic form of Fravartis or Pirruvartis, could easily become Aphravartis, Arphavartis, Arphaxad, because we are naturally inclined to assimilate an unknown name with a known name, as we had already occasion to remark.

Phraorte, successor of Dejoces on the throne of the Medes, reigned twenty-two years, from 657 to 635 B. C. Thus he was a contemporary of the King of Ninive, Assurbanipal, who reigned from 668 to 625 B. C. Assurbanipal is, therefore, the Nabuchodonosor of the Book of Judith, who sent his general Holofernes to the conquest of Western Asia. The campaigns of the Assyrian general are related in the first chapters of the Book of Judith. They have criticised them from the literary point of view, on the charge of irrelevancy and prolixity. This reproach is of little importance. The author wrote a history, not a fiction; he describes the events as they took place without troubling himself to satisfy the impatience by curtailing all those preliminaries which appear uninteresting; a romancist should consult only his art; a historian must seek above any other consideration to tell the truth.

It is true that they judge also all these wars of Holofernes as very improbable and even incredible, whence they conclude that they never took place. It is easy, however, to show that this is a false judgment. We are in possession of the very original of the annals of the reign of Assurbanipal, the King of Assyria, who,

according to all probability, as we saw before, is the Nabuchodonosor that placed Holofernes at the head of his army. Now, in his annals, we discover the account of all the campaigns of which the Book of Judith speaks. Assurbanipal had combated the Medes in the first years of his reign. His dominion extended over the whole territory of Asia Minor to Egypt inclusively. This is attested by both his inscriptions and the sacred text. Manasses was then King of Juda and was one of his tributaries. Having revolted against his master, he was made prisoner and led away captive to Babylon, as we have seen in a preceding chapter. But this prince was not the only one that had revolted. All those whom the King of Ninive had subdued, from Lydia and Cilicia to the shores of the Nile, had thrown off the yoke of Assurbanipal. The King's own brother, Samassumukin, who governed Babylon, had kindled the fire of the revolt to gain his own independence. The King of Assyria, as he himself relates and as can be seen in the Book of Judith, desired his former vassals to expiate their revolt, and he undertook to subdue in person, or through his generals, all the countries that had refused to pay him tribute—Cilicia, Lydia, Syria, and the neighboring countries of the Mediterranean. He made the conquered peoples undergo the same treatment as those which are mentioned in the Book of Judith. Finally, and this is a very important and significant detail, after having undertaken the war in order to reduce Egypt under his obedience, the Book of Judith speaks no longer of this kingdom; a certain proof that Assurbanipal did not lead this enterprise to a triumphant conclusion, and an indirect confirmation of what we read in the sacred author concerning the disaster which annihilated in Palestine the army of Holofernes, who had been ordered to reconquer Egypt. It is impossible not to be impressed by the agreement which exists between the Hebrew document and the cuneiform documents. How many accounts are there whose historical value is not contested, that are less solidly established than that of the Book of Judith?

However, we are not done with the objections they raise against the history of the war of Holofernes. Many anachronisms, it is claimed, are found in the text; the author mentions the Sanhedrin (*gerousia*), the vigils of the Sabbath and of the Neomeniae (iv. 8 vi.; 14; xv. 8, Greek text). Now, the institution of the Sanhedrin dates only from the third or even second century B. C. and the

vigils of the Sabbath and of the Neomeniae were regarded as feasts only in a much later period. Consequently, the Sanhedrin and these vigils did not exist in the time of Judith.

It is true that the Sanhedrin is posterior to the time in which this history takes place, but the text makes no allusion to it. When it uses the word *gerousia*, one of the names which designate that assembly in the language of the Hellenist Jews, the sacred historian employs it in a different sense, namely, meaning the Ancients of the People. This expression has often this meaning in the version of the Septuagint (Lev. ix. 3; Exod. iii. 16, 18; iv. 29; Num. xxii. 4; Deut. v. 23, etc.), and it has this meaning in Judith, as the Vulgate has translated it (Judith xv. 9). As to the vigils of the Sabbath and of the Neomeniae, no one can affirm that these were unknown in the time of Judith, because no one knows at what time their observance originated. It is however probable that the original text did not speak about them, for no mention of them is made in our Latin translation, which only enumerates the Sabbaths and the Neomeniae (Judith viii, 6).

Finally, a last objection against the Book of Judith is drawn from a passage in the discourse of Achior, where he says that the inhabitants of Juda returned from captivity, after having been led away into a foreign country and after their temple had been profaned (v. 18-19, Greek text; 22-23, Vulgate). This language is an evident allusion, they say, to the Babylonian captivity, posterior, however, to the facts in question.

Nothing proves this allusion. We have seen that King Manasses was led away captive to Babylon; certainly he was not the only one that was thus led away, but with a certain number of his subjects, according to the invariable custom of the Assyrian kings, as is recorded by their inscriptions. Several of these captives could have received permission to return to their country, as was granted to Manasses himself. As to the profanation of the temple, there is no reason to be surprised thereat from what we know of the character of the King of Ninive. However, we must remark that the Latin translation says nothing about this, that the expressions which the Greek translation employs are very obscure and that, moreover, we cannot determine whether Achior had an exact knowledge of the events he relates, so that we have no assurance that his narrative is true in all its details.

We have only one more observation to make on the Book of Judith. This heroine was remarkable for her piety and chastity, as well as for her courage, which was far beyond that of her sex. We must, however, admit that several of her acts were not at all praiseworthy. The means which she employed to deliver her people from the enemy who had reduced them to the last extremity cannot be approved of without reserve. She deceived Holofernes with falsehoods, and if these falsehoods may be justified by the good faith of Judith, they are not excusable in themselves. As to the lawfulness of the murder of the Assyrian general, it is difficult to render judgment, from our point of view. According to the ideas of the time, it was certainly an heroic act. The employment of stratagem or violence to overcome an enemy is not considered demeaning in the eyes of Orientals. Besides, the magnificent patriotism which inspired the courageous act of the widow of Bethulia, would command the greatest admiration among any people, in any land, at any time. Those who have imbrued their hands in blood always form an exception, and often we cannot help admiring them, although we cannot always approve of their acts. Infidels make it a cause of reproach to her historian for having praised her without reserve. Various Catholic interpreters, who justify her without restriction, have held that the sacred text approved entirely of the conduct of Judith. But the language of Scripture is not so expressive as has been supposed. The praises given by St. Paul to Samson and to Jephthe, for example, are no approbation of their lives, which were not irreproachable in everything; what is said to the glory of Judith does not imply the justification of all the means which she employed to deliver her severely oppressed people. This is what St. Thomas teaches in his *Summa Theologica*. The sacred authors praised the good intentions, and the acts worthy of approval; from this, however, it does not follow that the precious metal did not contain some alloy.

CHAPTER VII

THE BOOK OF ESTHER

THE Book of Esther finds no more favor in the eyes of the negative critic than those of Tobias and Judith. It is presented to us as an historical book: the events take place at the court of Xerxes, in his capital, the city of Susa; but this matters little with Rationalists. For them this book is "a parable, a superabundant testimony of Jewish pride and arrogance." M. Nöldecke, after having affirmed that "this book is, in all its parts, void of any historical value," is forced to contradict himself and make the following avowal: "Does this account rest upon any historical foundation? We are unable to answer with certitude. The name Ahasveros (Assuerus) would seem to indicate this; they agree to-day in acknowledging him to be identical with Xerxes. It is quite possible that he admitted a Jewess into his harem, named Esther, and that she acted in favor of her people."

If all this is possible, why deny the historical character of this book? They allege improbabilities. We have already seen the weakness or even the worthlessness of this argument. A fact is not always true because it is probable, and it is not always false because it is improbable or even incredible.

The objection which all Rationalists adduce is, how "Esther, having become the wife of the king, could conceal for so long a time her origin from the court, the king and Aman himself." But wherever polygamy is practiced, they do not attach any great importance to the origin of a woman. How many inhabitants of harems are there whose birth and lineage are unknown, and even could not be ascertained if such were desired! Besides, Mardochæus had advised Esther not to reveal that she was a Jewess, and when Assuerus had the curiosity to inquire who she was, the young queen being orphaned quite early in life, having been born in Persia, speaking the language of the country, given a Persian name, it was very easy for her to dissemble her nationality and to answer without betraying her secret, all the questions propounded by her royal husband.

It is equally incredible, they add, that Aman delayed his vengeance for eleven months; the vindictive spirit is not so patient.

"How can we believe," says Bleek, "that if the Persian despot, even gained over by a favorite, had formed the project of annihilating all the Jews of his kingdom, he would have caused this to be announced publicly in all the provinces of his kingdom to all the peoples, and not secretly to his governors, twelve months before its execution?"

The sacred text gives us the explanation of this delay. The Persians were very superstitious; they believed in lucky and unlucky days; in our time, there are many who believe the same. Aman, therefore, consulted the fates during the first month of the twelfth year of Xerxes (473), in order to know what would be the most propitious moment for the execution of his design, and the oracle designated to him the twelfth month. Hence he was obliged to wait eleven months (Esther iii. 7). Providence permitted this, in order to reveal its protection over the chosen people.

But, they insist, in this case why did he publish the edict such a long time before? To prevent the king from revoking his word; also to excite, undoubtedly, the cupidity of the nations subject to the Persians and to increase the antipathy of the enemies of the Jews,—for Anti-Semitism existed at all times,—in order to render more easy the execution of the measure.

But this was, again they say, providing the condemned with the means of escaping the bloody measure taken against them. It was not so easy for them to leave the Persian empire, which was immense; they could not take refuge in Palestine, because this was a province of the great king. If, besides, some succeeded in finding a refuge, Aman, perhaps, desired this, for then they were obliged to abandon their goods and thus furnished the favorite with the means of paying to Assuerus the ten thousand talents which he had promised him.

It is not less incredible, they object, that, when the king, repenting of his order and refusing nevertheless to withdraw it, had authorized the Jews by a second edict to defend themselves against the enemies that would attack them, this second edict could have as a consequence the destruction, in all the countries where there were Jews, of 75,000 men equally subject to the king.

The number of the dead is not improbable for an empire which extended from India to Ethiopia. In a much smaller kingdom, Mithridates caused the killing of 80,000 Romans in one day.

By supposing even, Rationalists continue, that the royal governors, through fear of the new royal favorite, Mardocheus, protected only the Jews, they could not assist them, however, in an efficacious manner, because the first edict had not been recalled.

The effect of the second edict must have restrained all the chief citizens from attacking the Jews, in order not to incur the disfavor of Mardocheus. Nothing prevented the Persian satraps and officers from upholding secretly or even publicly those who were then in favor at the court. It is difficult to explain a similar objection; for who does not know of the servility which an Oriental functionary is capable of, in order to please those who can procure him advancement or, at least, have power to keep him in office? Personal interest removes all scruple, and it is not the first decree annulled by a second, which could paralyze official ambition and obsequiousness.

It is quite contrary to nature, finally, they say, that when the Jews had killed on the first day, when the royal edict ordained their death, 500 of their enemies in the city of Susa, the king would listen to the prayer of Esther, insatiable for blood and vengeance, to publish another edict authorizing the continuance of the massacre, since it was no longer permitted to attack the Jews.

It was no longer legally permitted to attack the Jews, but those of their enemies that had not perished, had undoubtedly formed the project of making them expiate on the following day, when they expected that they could strike them with impunity, for the murders committed on the former day. It was in order to foil this calculation that Esther interceded anew with Assuerus. We are far from pretending that in this the queen acted with an evangelical kindness, but she was a woman of her time, she shared the ideas and habits and, as we have observed about Judith, while everything in her conduct is not praiseworthy, we cannot at least refuse rendering homage to her patriotism and admire the devotedness for her people. Thus, none of the alleged objections by negative criticism against the sacred account has any value.

Not only are the objections of Rationalists without force, but, moreover, all the facts are verified by history. All that is said about the ostentation and magnificence of the Persian kings, of their palaces, and of their gardens is confirmed by ancient authors and by the excavations at Susa itself. All the traits of the

character of Assuerus or Xerxes (485-465 B. C.) are equally confirmed by the most unexceptionable historic testimonies. Herodotus and Plutarchus represent him under the same colors as the sacred writer, that is, as a whimsical, fantastic, and extravagant monarch. He strikes with rods and ties with chains the Hellespont, because a storm had carried off the bridge of boats which he had built across the sea (Herodotus vii. 35). He wrote a letter to Mount Athos forbidding it to roll stones down upon his soldiers (Plutarchus, *De cohibenda ira*, 5). One who committed such acts of folly is quite capable of all that the Book of Esther attributes to him. This book does not attribute to him such senseless actions. Herodotus tells us, moreover, as the Hebrew historian, that his empire extended from India to Persia (Esther i. 1; Herodotus vii. 7, 9, 97, 98), and that in his army more than sixty different nations were represented. Finally, Herodotus indirectly confirms the biblical account of the feasts which were celebrated at Susa and which brought on the repudiation of Vasthi, followed by the elevation of Esther to the dignity of Queen. In 482, after having subdued Egypt, Assuerus assembled at Susa all the principal chiefs of the empire and for a long time deliberated with them in regard to the expedition he projected against Greece. The war against the Greeks commenced in 480. After being checkmated, Xerxes returned into Persia in 479. It was then they gathered together the young girls to be offered to the king, and it is this expedition against the Greeks which explains to us the long interval between the repudiation of Vasthi and the choice of Esther. The chronology of Xerxes is therefore in perfect harmony with the Scriptural narrative.

There exists, besides, an always living proof of the reality of the history of Esther, namely, the celebration of the Jewish festival of *Purim*, which is the annual commemoration thereof. The children of Israel have never ceased to celebrate it with the greatest rejoicings. They have given it the name of "Mardocheus' Day," as well as that of Purim (II. Mach. xv. 37). Such an institution can be explained only by the reality of the facts which it recalls to mind; its very name, which signifies "fates," is fixed and interpreted by the sacred narrative (Esther ix. 24, 26, 31). Rationalists have no serious objection to offer against such a formal and explicit testimony. "The author," says Nöldeke, "had for his object to acquaint all

the Jews with the origin of the feast of Purim, and to recommend to them its observation. The establishment of this feast, unknown to the Pentateuch, *does not seem* to have any connection with the deliverance of the Jews from threatened death. (This manner of denying without proof by a 'it does not seem,' an event related at great length and with much detail, is more than strange.) This feast *must be* a borrowing made from Persia (new affirmation *a priori* and without proofs). Even to this day, the Jews have adopted certain feasts from other religions (admitted, but show us the books in which they relate that these feasts have a distinctive Jewish origin, like that of Purim). In every case we can maintain that this joyful feast is not that which is attributed to it here." And why? They do not tell. It is difficult to present a more pitiful argument: it is denying, in order to deny, without even a plausible pretext. This language, stripped of its equivocations, signifies: we have no proofs, but we deny nevertheless.

The borrowing of the feast of Purim from Persia is admitted, in spite of the absence of proofs, by several Rationalists. Paul de Lagarde has even discovered the Persian feast of which the Jews took hold; it is that of Fordigan or Pordigan, by which the Persians celebrate with great festivities the commemoration of their dead. Such is not the object of the feast of Purim, as we have seen, but the word Purim, in certain Greek manuscripts, is written *phourdia*, *phourmaia* or *phrouraiēna*, and hence the Jewish feast has a Persian origin! A *lapsus calami* of the scribes furnishes the demonstration. When recourse to such bad reasoning becomes necessary, it is equivalent to the admission that no good reasoning is possible.

It only remains for us to say a few words about the additions we notice in the Greek and Latin Bibles.

The Book of Esther, besides its proto-canonical part which we have in Hebrew, contains also a deutero-canonical part, which no longer exists in the versions. It contains a certain number of passages which we might call justifying passages, namely, the edicts of the great king, and various pieces which are as so many supplements; the dream of Mardocheus, his prayer to God and that of Esther, etc. The authenticity of all these additions is naturally rejected by all Rationalists and also by many Protestants

who admit the historical character of the book, such as it appears in the Hebrew Bible.

However, they have no particular objection to bring against these fragments. They were known and accepted by the historian Josephus, who made use of them in his *Jewish Antiquities*; consequently their antiquity cannot be questioned: the Hebraisms which we mark therein, as well as the existence of two different Greek translations, tend to prove that they are translated from a Greek original; all that we read therein is in harmony with the contents of the proto-canonical part. There exists, therefore, no reason to contest the veracity thereof.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIRST BOOK OF MACHABEES

ALL the critics, even Rationalists, are to-day agreed in admitting the historic authority of the First Book of Machabees. "We cannot have any doubt," says Schürer, "as to the credibility it merits on the whole. It is one of the sources most worthy of faith that we possess for the history of the Jewish people. . . . It has particularly an exceptional value on account of its dating the events according to a fixed era, that of the Seleucides, which commences in 312 B. C." (*Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes*, Vol. II. p. 580.) They have made, however, against the First Book of Machabees four objections which we have to answer.

They have reference either to the Greco-Macedonian history, or to the judgments passed on the Romans. "The author is not well informed about foreign nations," says Schürer. "We recognize in his language the naïve point of view of an observer who studies exclusively the events according to the native sources" (*Opus cit.*).

The history of the Machabees opens as follows: *Now it came to pass, after that Alexander the son of Philip the Macedonian, who first reigned in Greece, coming out of the land of Cethim [Europe], had overthrown Darius, King of the Persians and of*

the Medes, etc. (I. Mach. i, 1). The Greek text adds that Alexander was the first who reigned in Greece, "instead of Darius." Such is the passage which gives rise to the first objection.

The reading of the Vulgate offers no serious difficulty. The sacred author could truly say that Alexander the Great was the first who ruled over Greece. Alexander did not possess the title of King of Greece, although the monarchial power was invested in him, as is even generally admitted by our adversaries. The general assembly of the Greeks at Corinth conferred upon Alexander the dignity of general-in-chief, as previously upon his father, and thus he was in fact King of Greece. He is, moreover, the first who placed on his coins the title of king. However, it is not at all certain that the original text did characterize Alexander "first" king of Greece. According to the Syriac version and several Greek manuscripts, it is simply said "that he was King of Greece before becoming Master" of Asia. But since further on (vi. 2) the sacred text explicitly states that Alexander *was the first king of the Greeks*, it matters little if the Syriac version and Greek manuscripts do not say so.

As for the expression of the Greek text that Alexander reigned over Greece instead of Darius, it cannot be justified in the sense in which it is generally understood. It has been stated that Darius Codomanus claimed for himself the sovereignty over the Greeks, and that by destroying his power, the son of Philip had replaced him. But besides, that this explanation is hardly a natural one, then Alexander would not have been the first that reigned over Greece. However, we do not need to defend an expression which is neither in the Vulgate nor in the Syriac version. The Greek text which we possess is only a translation from the original Hebrew, which has been lost. Now, the version of the first verse leaves much to be desired. The phrasing is poorly constructed, and we must not understand it in the sense that Darius reigned over Greece, nor that Alexander became king of Greece instead of Darius, which would be not only contrary to history, but also to the language of the historian, as we said before. We must translate, as the Syriac version has done: "Alexander reigned first over Greece, and he became King (of Asia), instead of Darius."

The second objection has for its object what the sacred author says (i. 6-7) of Alexander the Great: *that before dying he divided*

his kingdom among his generals. Here the biblical writer is accused of great ignorance.

In fact, however, the Jewish writer has not displayed any greater ignorance than the historians of Alexander. They relate that the most conflicting rumors were circulated with regard to his last moments, and as to the nature of the will he had made; his biographers contradict one another, and, if we adhere only to their testimony it is impossible for rationalistic critics to discover the truth. According to Arrien, when they asked the conqueror to whom he would leave his kingdom, he answered: "To the most worthy." But Arrien is careful to remark that this is simply the version of the historians, and he adds "that they have written many other things about the death of Alexander the Great" (*Exped. Alexand.* vii. 16, 27). Quintus Curcius states expressly that "several believed that Alexander had divided by will his provinces among his generals" (*Hist. Alex.* x. 10). It is this, the author of the Second Book of the Machabees relates, except the important circumstance of the will, of which he does not speak. Several Oriental writers are also in accord with him, such as Moses of Khoren and various Persian and Arabian chroniclers. According to all testimony, it is impossible to-day to denounce as false, the account of the sacred historian, and, even from a purely profane standpoint, by what right can one reject his testimony, when nothing is certain; the more so as he is the most ancient writer that has made known to us the last moments of Alexander the Great? He wrote one century before our era, and Diodor of Sicily wrote only under the reign of Augustus, Quintus Curcius under that of Tiberius, and Arrien under that of Hadrian.

The third objection against the First Book of Macabees has reference to the following passage:

Now Judas heard of the fame of the Romans, that they were powerful and strong, and willingly agreed to all things that are requested of them: and that whosoever have come to them they have amity with them, and that they are mighty in power. And they heard of their battles, and their noble acts, which they had done in Galatia, how they had conquered them, and brought them under tribute: And how great things they had done in the land of Spain, and that they had brought under their power the mines of silver and of gold that are there, and had gotten possession of all

the place by their counsel and patience. And had conquered places that were very far off from them, and kings that came against them from the ends of the earth, and had overthrown them with great slaughter : and the rest pay them tribute every year. And that they had defeated in battle Philip, and Perses the king of the Ceteans, and the rest that had borne arms against them, and had conquered them : And how Antiochus the great king of Asia, who went to fight against them, having a hundred and twenty elephants, with horsemen, and chariots, and a very great army, was routed by them : And how they took him alive, and appointed to him, that both he and they that should reign after him, should pay a great tribute, and that he should give hostages, and that which was agreed upon. And the country of the Indians, and of the Medes, and of the Lydians, some of their best provinces : and those which they had taken from them they gave to King Eumenes. And that they who were in Greece had a mind to go and to destroy them : and they had knowledge thereof. And they sent a general against them, and fought with them, and many of them were slain, and they carried away their wives and their children captives, and spoiled them, and took possession of their land, and threw down their walls, and brought them to be their servants unto this day. And the other kingdoms, and islands, that at any time had resisted them, they had destroyed and brought under their power. But with their friends, and such as relied upon them, they kept amity, and had conquered kingdoms that were near, and that were far off : for all that heard their name, were afraid of them. That whom they had a mind to help to a kingdom, those reigned : and whom they would, they deposed from the kingdom : and they were greatly exalted. And none of all these wore a crown, or was clothed in purple, to be magnified thereby. And that they had made themselves a senate-house, and consulted daily three hundred and twenty men, that sat in counsel always for the people, that they might do the things that were right. And that they committed their government to one man every year, to rule over all their country, and they all obey one, and there is no envy, nor jealousy amongst them (I. Mach. viii. 1-16).

The above passage is given as an example of the errors into which the sacred writer has fallen. "The first Book of Machabees," says Nöldecke, "is a beautiful monument of its epoch. It merits

the confidence of the historian more than any other book of the Old Testament. . . . Where it fails against truth, it is through error, when, for instance, it speaks of far away peoples like the Romans."

Certainly, we are far from pretending that the judgment passed on the Romans, and all the facts enumerated in Chapter viii. of the First Book of Machabees, are entirely correct. The Republic had two annual consuls and not one only. Its disinterestedness was not such as Judas the Machabee believed; jealousy and envy were not evils unknown to the Romans; the number of senators was not 320, but 300; they did not assemble every day, this they were even forbidden to do, etc.

But, whatever they may say about the details, they cannot accuse the sacred historian of any historical error. He states expressly that Judas "heard the account" of all these things (viii. 1, 2); he speaks from rumor, and he relates current rumors as then existing in Judea in regard to the Romans; his exactitude in the present case must exist and really does exist, not in writing a chapter of the real history of Rome, but in being the faithful interpreter of the rumors which, being circulated in Judea, had come to the ears of Judas the Machabee, and induced the Jewish hero, because even of the falsity they contained, to seek the Roman alliance. It is a principle admitted by all theologians and by all authors who have occupied themselves with sacred hermeneutics, that inspiration does not imply that all we read in Scripture is true in itself. The discourses of the friends of Job are partly tainted with error. What the Amalekite relates to David about the circumstances of the death of Saul is false (II. Ki. i. 2-10); nevertheless the sacred writer tells the truth in relating this falsehood, because this falsehood had been actually told by the Amalekite. So, also, the author of the First Book of Machabees tells the truth in relating the inexact ideas they had of the politics and history of the Romans in Judea, because they were really the current ideas in that country. Hence, one may point out in the passage quoted as many errors as he please, but this can furnish no material for a solid objection against the inspiration of the sacred writer.

Besides it is well to remark that they have often exaggerated these inaccuracies. Thus what is reported of Eumenes II. King of Pergamum, may be true. It is certain that the Romans, in order

to reward him for his attachment and the services he had rendered to them in the battle of Magnesia, gave him Lydia, as the sacred text says. If they did not give him India and Media, to round off his kingdom, which was in the west of Taurus, they gave him Ionia and Mysia (Titus Livius, xxxvii. 55 and xxxviii. 39), etc., and it is probable that we must read in our text the Ioians and Mysians, instead of the "Ionians and Medes."

The last inaccuracy with which the First Book of Machabees is charged, is that it supposes ties of relationship between the Jews and the Spartans. The sacred author reproduces a letter of Jonathas, the high-priest, to the Spartans and a letter of Arius I., King of Sparta, to the high-priest Onias. In both it is said, that these two peoples had a common origin (I. Mach. xii. 5-23). Whether this opinion was maintainable has been discussed at length. Most believe it hardly probable, but, whatever the foundation thereof may be we do not need to occupy ourselves here with that question. Whether the Spartans were or were not children of Abraham matters little, according to several modern commentators. The sacred writer limits himself to reporting two documents, the correctness of which he has not to certify to, but the existence of which he has only to affirm. The insertion of these letters into the structure of his narrative proves that these letters are authentic, but not that what they contain is founded and true. Hence, one may believe, in regard to this subject, what he pleases.

We must remark, however, that according to these letters, one cannot deny that Sparta and Judea were united by an alliance, for if the correspondents could have been deceived on the obscure question of a remote origin, the same cannot be said in regard to a recent fact. Also Rationalists themselves generally admit the reality of the alliance, although it is unknown to us from any other documents. Palmer, who has carefully studied this passage of the First Book of Machabees, believes that this alliance went back to the year 302, B. C. In this epoch, Demetrius Poliorcetus, having conquered the Peloponesus, went to assist his father Antigonus who called him back to Asia Minor to assist him to combat Cassander, Lysimachus, Ptolemy, and Seleucus, all confederates against him. The Spartans neglected nothing to increase the number of the enemies of Antigonus and of Demetrius: they sought to stir up against him different nations of Asia, and particularly

the Jews. Arius I. was at that time King of Sparta and Onias I., son of Jaddus, high-priest, as our texts indicate. The first reigned from 309 to 265 B. C.; the second exercised the sovereign pontificate from 323 to 300 B. C. The synchronism is, therefore, perfectly exact. Later on, about the year 144 B. C., Jonathas being in need of allies, naturally sought to renew the alliance which then had been concluded with the Spartans.

It has been urged, it is true, that the independence of Greece having been destroyed by the Romans since the year 146, it was not very probable that Judas the Machabee, had counted on the help of Sparta; but we know from Strabo (viii. 5, 5th edit. Didot. p. 314), that this city, which was for the Romans *civitas foederata*, preserved both its power and liberty, even after that catastrophe, and that it was only obliged to render some services to Rome; therefore, it could still be useful to the Jews. Consequently, one can allege nothing serious against the fact of correspondence. Also Wernsdorf, one of the most vehement enemies of the Books of Machabees, cannot help saying: "In the letter of Jonathas, I find nothing that could not have been written by a Jewish high-priest. . . . Certainly, it appears to have been written by a pious, grave, and prudent man, a man well versed in civil affairs. I remark therein well-connected words and very correct thoughts. . . . I find nothing therein that is blameworthy, except that he speaks too often of the ancient alliance between Arius and Onias, and of the supposed relationship between the two nations. But he was a man and may have been deceived." Therefore, one cannot bring forward any serious argument against the authenticity of this letter, any more than against the other official documents contained in this history.

We will say a few words, in concluding our examination of the First Book of the Machabees, of a passage which cannot offer any real difficulty, but which merits discussion. In describing the army of Antiochus V. Eupator, the sacred author says that they counted therein thirty-two elephants, on which they placed wooden towers, and that on each elephant there were thirty-two men (vi. 30, 37). The presence of elephants in the armies of the Seleucides presents no difficulty. This is attested by both profane historians and by the medals of the Syrian kings. What is embarrassing is the number of men placed on each of these animals.

In India, at all times, elephants had been made use of in warfare, and even in our day these massive quadrupeds are burdened with towers in that country; but it is impossible to place thirty-two men therein. According to Titus Livius, the towers of the elephants in the army of Antiochus the Great contained four men, aside from the elephant driver; Pliny relates that, in the games given by Julius Cæsar, the elephants which took part in the sham-battles carried three men; Elien indicates the same number for India; Munro says that in India these animals to-day carry four to five persons. Besides, it is enough to look at an elephant to see that he could not carry thirty-two warriors. How could one place on the back of a single one of these animals a tower large enough to contain so many armed men, who needed to be free in their movements in order to face the enemy? Moreover, the average weight which an elephant is capable of carrying is about 3,000 pounds, and we must reduce this to about one-half for long marches and combats. Now, they have figured that thirty-two soldiers would weigh at least 6,400 pounds. Also the most judicious interpreters are unanimously agreed in acknowledging that the reading of thirty-two is false, on account of an error of either the Greek translator or by a mistake of copyists. The correction which is most favorably accepted by the critics, is that proposed by Michaelis. He believes that the sacred author had written "two or three"; three put into the plural in Hebrew, means thirty. When elephants disappeared from the Syrian armies, because the Romans had forbidden the Seleucid kings to employ these animals in warfare, the copyists, not knowing them any longer, were inclined, according to the custom of the Orientals, to exaggerate the figures so that they read two and thirty or thirty-two instead of two or three.

CHAPTER IX

THE SECOND BOOK OF MACHABEES

As much as Rationalists render homage to the historical value of the First Book of Machabees, so much, according to them, the second of these books is unworthy of belief. In regard to a

great part of its contents, they say, it is replete with fiction and in contradiction with itself and with the writer of the first book. Behold how Nöldecke expresses himself on this subject:

"The value of the Second Book of Machabees is much inferior to that of the first. Certainly it gives some more complete accounts, especially for the history anterior to the time when the insurrection broke out. Josephus, who did not know this book, confirms its exactitude. Nevertheless we meet therein many errors from the standpoint of chronology and of events. It is all through only an exaggeration, a rhetorical figure, and replete with partisan spirit. Miracles and apparitions of angels are found on each page, and for the first time appear those histories of martyrs related in a measureless manner. The book is full of exuberant patriotism and of a bitter hatred against the stranger. The author was quite a slave to popular prejudices, and he wrote to strengthen them. In his opinions he justly resembles the Pharisees. Thus he strongly believes in the resurrection. In a word, his work forms in many points, a striking contrast to the First Book of Machabees." (*Literarische Geschichte des A. T.*)

The German critic, in reproaching the author for his miraculous accounts, reveals to us the reason why Rationalists are so badly disposed towards him. But miracles, as we have had occasion to state repeatedly, are not sufficient motive for questioning the veracity of a writer. Heliodorus, concerning whom is related one of the principal miracles, which had for its object to hinder the sacking of the temple of Jerusalem (II. Mach. iii.), is certainly an historical personage. He was minister of Seleucus IV. Philopator, king of Syria (187-175 B. C.). Appien teaches us that he caused the death of his master in order to lay hold of the throne (*De rebus syriacis*). They discovered, in 1877 and 1879 on the island of Delos, two Greek inscriptions which have reference to him. They make known to us that his father was called Eschylus and that he was Antiochus. One of these inscriptions gives him the same title as the Book of Machabees and in the same terms.

The objections raised against the letters at the beginning of this book, and in which we read also miraculous facts, have no better foundation. Infidels, like Nöldecke, reject them absolutely. He says: "The Second Book of the Machabees must be before all

freed from the two letters which are placed at the head of this work. It is pretended that they were written by the Jews of Palestine to recommend their brethren of Egypt to take part in the feast of the consecration of the Temple. The first even bears as inscription, a date which answers to the year 143 B. C. (i. 10). Both letters are evidently unauthentic; the first, quite incomplete, contains a false chronological account; the second is full of fables and would be most absurd, were it really the letter of a community. These letters contain more than one contradiction with the very facts related in the Book of Machabees" (*Opus cit.*).

Such are the objections. Behold the answer: "The first letter," they say, "contains a false chronological account." There is nothing of the kind. In verse 7, of Chapter i., there is question of the year 169 and, in verse 10, of the year 188 of the era of the Seleucides, that is, of the year 144, and of the year 124 B. C. They desired to see in these two contradictory dates of the letter, but without reason. The letter was written in 124, and what is said of 144 is reported as a past fact.

They claim, it is true, that if the letter was written in 124, the Jews of Judea would have invited those of Egypt, as they do by this letter, to celebrate the feast of the purification of the Temple, established by Judas the Machabee, only forty years after its institution.

What is inadmissible in this? The Jews of Palestine might have had reasons, of which we have no knowledge, to write at that time only to their coreligionists of Egypt; besides, nothing proves that this invitation was the first; it is possible that it was only the renewal of an invitation which had been previously extended.

The second letter placed at the beginning of the Second Book of Machabees is still more vigorously disputed. The facts which they refuse to regard as historical are three: the miracle of the sacred fire, drawn from a dried up well, by order of Nehemias, and kindling itself (i. 10-36); the history of Jeremias hiding the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant upon Mount Nebo (ii. 4-8); and finally the death of Antiochus which is related differently from the history of Jason, the source of the chapters following (i. 13-16 and ix.).

Those who deny the supernatural and the miraculous must reject the account of the sacred fire miraculously kindling itself,

but they refuse to admit it on philosophical and not historical grounds, just as they refuse to accept, in virtue of the same principles, the miracles of the fire burning the holocausts of Aaron (Lev. ix. 24), of Salomon (II. Par. vii. 1), and of the prophet Elias (III. Ki. xviii. 38). All these facts are nevertheless historical. What the letter of the Jews relates could be well known to them by oral tradition; moreover, it was drawn up from written sources, lost to-day, but to which they were careful to refer (II. Mach. ii. 1, 4, 13).

With regard to the history of the Ark and the Tabernacle hidden by Jeremias on Mount Nebo, one could hardly understand why rationalistic critics refuse to admit this fact, if it were unknown to us that they pretend that the Ark and the Tabernacle never did exist. Since the account of the Books of Machabees contradict their affirmations, they deny it, and since they cannot deny it without some pretext, they say that Jeremias was in prison at the time when the city was taken, and that it was impossible for one man to carry the Ark and the Tabernacle from Jerusalem beyond the Jordan on Mount Nebo.

In answer to the above we say: undoubtedly, Jeremias was in prison, but he was delivered by the Chaldean conquerors, and between the time he was set at liberty and the destruction of the Temple, one month elapsed (Jer. xxxviii. 28; xxxix. 2, 11-14; lii. 12-13). Hence, he had ample time to transport these sacred objects. As for the necessary help what would have prevented the prophet from appealing to his friends for assistance? Nabuchodonosor had given orders to grant Jeremias full liberty (Jer. xxxix. 12).

The third fact, that of the death of Antiochus, offers a real difficulty. The letter seems to relate the same event which we read a few chapters further on, and which is also reported in the First Book (II. Mach. i. 13-16 and ix; I. Mach. vi.), but the circumstances, as to the place where Antiochus learned the news of the defeat of his army, or as to the nature of his illness, are so different that a reconciliation appears impossible. "It has been remarked," says Celerier, "that in both Books of the Machabees, Antiochus dies in three different ways."

We admit that the Antiochus whose death is related in the First Book of Machabees and in the body of the account of the

Second, is the same, that is, Antiochus IV. Epiphanes. Further on we will inquire whether the one of whom the letter of the Jerusalem Jews speaks is not different.

They point out, in the first place, a contradiction about the name of the place whose temple Antiochus IV. Epiphanes wished to pillage. In the First Book of Machabees, according to the received reading and the translation of the Vulgate, it is Elymais, a city of Persia (I. Mach. vi. 1); in the second, it is Persepolis (II. Mach. ix. 2).

It is easy to clear up both passages. The reading "Elymais," city of Persia, is false; the better Greek manuscripts read: "There is in Elymaid, in Persia, a famous city," etc. This reading is the only true one, for there never existed a city called Elymais. Therefore, the sacred author does not name the city whose temple Antiochus tried to pillage; he only says that it was situated in the province of Elymaid, which formed a part of the kingdom of Persia. Polybius (xxxii. 11) and Appien (*De rebus syriacis*) do the same. The Second Book of Machabees designates the city by the name of Persepolis. As this city was situated in Persia, properly speaking, not in Media, it can be supposed that "Persepolis" signifies in this passage, not the city called by this name, but, in translating the word, "the city or capital of the Persians," that is, probably Susa, in Elymaid one of the principal royal residences of the king of Persia, and one of the best known by the Jews on account of the history of Esther and of Assuerus.

After his attempt to pillage the Temple, Antiochus Epiphanes learns of the disaster which the Jews inflicted on his army; he learns this "in Persia," says the First Book of Machabees: "near Ecbatana," consequently, in Media, says the Second (I. Mach. vi. 5; II. Mach. ix. 3).

There exists no contradiction between the two accounts; only the second, as in the preceding case, is more precise and indicates in a more express manner where the Syrian king then was; whilst the first indicates this only in a vague and general manner, understanding by Persia to include the whole of Ariana, which comprised Media, because this province formed a part of the kingdom of Persia. Antiochus, according to Polybius and St. Jerome (*Comm. in Dan.* xi. 44, 45), died at Tabes, a city of Persia, province of Paraetacena, between Ecbatana and Persepolis (*Quintus Curcius*,

v. 13). The circumstances of his death are related more at length in the Second Book of Machabees than in the First, but both passages are in perfect harmony; the second narrator completes only what the first had abridged (I. Mach. vi. 8-16; II. Mach. ix. 5-18).

The reconciliation of these two accounts offers, therefore, no serious difficulty. Can the same be said of the narrative of the death of Antiochus contained in the letter of the Jews? According to this letter, Antiochus, wishing to pillage the Temple of Nanea, is introduced therein by the priests of the goddess, with a small number of companions and is killed (II. Mach. i. 14-16). According to the narrative of the First and Second Books of Machabees, inserted in the body of the work, Antiochus is repulsed from the temple which he intended to pillage and dies on the road, when returning to Syria (I. Mach. vi. 1-16; II. Mach. ix. 2-28).

These details appear absolutely irreconcilable, if we admit, as rationalistic and even Catholic interpreters are doing, that the Antiochus designated in all these places is the same. But the letter of the Jews does not say at all that the king of whom it speaks is Antiochus IV. Epiphanes; and because the one whose death it relates perished in another manner than Antiochus IV., the natural conclusion is that another Antiochus is meant. Indeed, it is hard to admit that a writer, even not inspired, could contradict himself so formally so few pages apart. Even if we had no means of explaining these two passages, on accounts having come to us about these so remote times, we would have the right to affirm as follows: the king whom the writer, at the beginning of his work, makes die a violent death in a temple which he intends to pillage, is not the same king whose death he describes further on. The latter, he tells us, was obliged to flee at the moment, when he also wished to pillage a temple;* the author gives us the most circumstantial details of his flight and of the last days of his life, of the nature of his sickness which caused him great pain, of the accident on the road which aggravated his state, of the worms which gnawed his body and which caused it to putrefy.

* That two kings of the same name made an attempt to pillage a temple, must not surprise us, because this was nothing rare in antiquity. Strabo reports, for instance, that a Parthian king, Mithridates I., pillaged, and with more success than Antiochus, in the same province of Elymaid, two temples, the one at Athens, the other at Artemis. Strabo xvi. 1, 4. See what Diodorus of Sicily says, xxviii. 3, vol. ii., p. 473, of a Macedonian king.

The two pictures are different; therefore, they do not represent the death of the same personage.

We might be justified in drawing this conclusion if we could not bring forward any other proofs. But to corroborate it and render it unassailable we have other arguments. We know from profane authors that two kings of Syria, both bearing the name of Antiochus, perished, the one in the manner related in chapter vi. of the First Book of Machabees, and in chapter ix. of the Second Book,—this is Antiochus Epiphanes,—the other in the manner related by the letter of the Jerusalem Jews,—this is Antiochus III. the Great. A fragment of Polybius, which happily escaped the wreck of a part of his works, contains the following: "In Syria, King Antiochus, wishing to procure money, resolved to undertake an expedition against the temple of Diana in the Elymaid. When he had arrived there he was frustrated in his hopes, because the barbarians who lived in these places hindered him from executing so great a crime. During his return, he died at Tabes, a city of Persia, attacked with madness, as some say, on account of the prodigies wrought by the deity of the temple whom he had offended." The agreement, on the whole, between Polybius and that of the two Books of Machabees as to the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, leaves nothing to desire.

Behold now how various ancient writers relate the death of Antiochus IV. the Great. "Antiochus the Great," says Strabo (xvi. 1, 18); "being desirous to pillage the temple of Belus, the barbarians of the neighborhood attacked him without any other help and killed him." "King Antiochus," says Justin (XXXII. ii. 1), "with his army attacked at night the temple of the Elymean Jupiter. The matter becoming known, he with his army was killed by the concourse of the inhabitants."* According to these accounts, Antiochus III. perished, therefore, as related by the letter of the Jews, that is, murdered whilst pillaging the temple of Belus. Since the circumstances of the death related by both the letter and the profane authors are the same, and different from those of Antiochus IV., how can we doubt that there is question here of Antiochus III.?

*It is called temple of Belus or Elymean Jupiter, whilst the letter designates the temple of Nanea. Nanea was the espoused goddess of Bel. Therefore, they must have also honored her in the temple of Bel.

Against this explanation, it is objected, that the king in question had persecuted the Jews, and that Antiochus III. was no persecutor. But the text does not speak of a persecution properly speaking; it speaks only of combats (II. Mach. i. 2), and contains nothing against the king himself. The letter even makes no allusion to the profanation of the temple, although it had for object to ask the Jews of Egypt to participate in the feast of the temple. There is every reason to believe that the Jews of Jerusalem would have adopted quite a different tone, if there had been question of persecutions by Antiochus Epiphanes. The First and Second Books of Machabees relating the death of the latter, use quite different language.

Besides, the whole part of the letter that refers to the death of the King of Syria is easily understood, if we admit that it has reference to Antiochus III., as is indicated by the details given by the Jews and by the profane writers. The news of his death must have been agreeable to the Egyptians and also undoubtedly to the Jews, who, like Aristobolus, lived at the court of the Egyptian king, because Antiochus III., had been almost his lifetime at war with the Egyptians. It is for this motive that the inhabitants of Jerusalem commence their letter with the narrative: *Having been delivered by God out of great dangers, we give Him great thanks, forasmuch as we have been at war with such a king* (II. Mach. i. 11).

This king is the king of Egypt, of whom there question in the preceding verse and who was master of Palestine, at the death of Antiochus III. The Jews had already fought against the King of Egypt. They had subjected themselves willingly to Antiochus III., King of Syria, in joining his troops, who besieged Scopas, general of Ptolemy, in the fortress of Jerusalem (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XII. iii. 3); now they were expected to combat Egypt anew. Some time after the capture of the citadel of Jerusalem, the King of Syria had ceded Palestine, which had fallen again under his dominion, to the king of Egypt, giving it as a gift to his daughter Cleopatra (Josephus, *Opus cit.* XII. iv. 1). He acted deceitfully and he counted on this marriage to realize his ambitious projects against the Ptolemies; he was deceived; his daughter sided with her husband against her own father (Dan. xi. 17 and St. Jerome, *in loc.* vol. xxv. col. 564), and the Romans hindered him from taking revenge on Egypt. Then

he directed himself towards Asia Minor, where he had varied success, passed into Greece, and by the advice of Hannibal, the famous Carthagenian general who had taken refuge with him, he entered into war with the Romans. An unfortunate undertaking. Stopped in his victorious course at the Thermopylæ, in 191 B. C. he was, after different defeats, completely beaten at Magnesia of Lydia, in 190. The peace, concluded in 188, was a hard one for him. The conquerors obliged him to give up all his possessions to the west of Mount Taurus and to pay to them, in successive installments, the enormous sum of fifteen millions of Eubean talents.*

In order to fulfill this onerous condition, Antiochus desired to pillage the temple of Nanea where he perished. Had he succeeded in his undertaking, there is reason to believe that he would have attempted to take revenge on the Egyptians for the disgrace the Romans had heaped upon him. After having been an enemy of Egypt all his lifetime, he certainly must have entertained evil designs against that country. Although the Jews could not personally complain against him during the latter years, they certainly would have had to suffer by a war between the Seleucides and the Ptolemies. Under these circumstances, whoever was the conqueror or conquered, they always would have been the victims. "Under the reign of Antiochus, the Great King of Asia," says Josephus (*Opus cit.* XII. iii. 3), speaking of former wars, "it happened that the Jews, whose country was ravaged, . . . had a good deal to suffer. Whilst this prince waged war against Ptolemy Philopator and against his son, surnamed Epiphanes, the Jews would have had to suffer, if Antiochus would have been the conqueror, and they would have had to suffer equally if he had been conquered, so that they appeared like a vessel which, in the midst of a storm, is tossed by the waves towards all sides, because they found themselves in the midst of combatants, in the good as well as in the evil fortune of Antiochus."

When Antiochus perished by assassination, Judea, we must not forget, belonged to the kings of Egypt, but, through Josephus, we know that Antiochus III. left nothing undone to gain the favor of the Jews, and all their sympathies were with this prince. He had, therefore, a powerful party in the holy city and, as can

* The Eubean talent amounted to about \$1,112.00.

be seen in the letter of the Jews, this party had raised its banner, and the war was to break out at the moment when the news of the death of the King of Syria frustrated all the projects of his adherents.

Therefore, everything concurs in establishing that the Antiochus whose death the Jews relate is Antiochus III. the Great. They object, however, again to this explanation, maintaining that his death was long past when the letter was written so that it could not be announced then as news to the Egyptians. But this objection supposes that we know the date of the letter. Now, the letter is not dated. Therefore, we can fix its date only by its contents. Those who believe that Antiochus whose death is related is Epiphanes, say that it was written about 162, because Antiochus Epiphanes died in 163, and because Judas Machabeus, whom they suppose to be one of the authors of the letter, died in 161. According to this, it would have been drawn up twenty-five years after the death of Antiochus the Great (187); certainly no one announces an event of this kind twenty-five years after its fulfillment.—But we cannot fix the date of the letter according to the death of Antiochus, of whom it does not speak, as we have seen. The only thing which can serve to determine approximately the time when this writing was sent to Egypt, is the signature which informs us that it was addressed to Aristobolus, “the teacher of King Ptolemy.” It is generally admitted this Aristobolus is the peripatetic philosopher of that name, who dedicated to Ptolemy Philometor his allegorical explanation of the Pentateuch. They also explain the word “teacher” *didaskalos*, of King Ptolemy, as meaning counselor. This King Ptolemy is not distinguished by any first name. The Ptolemy who governed Egypt when Antiochus III. died was Ptolemy V. Epiphanes (204–181). Aristobolus, who dedicated his work on the Books of Moses to the son of Ptolemy V., that is, Ptolemy VI. Philometor (181–146), might very well have been the “counselor” of the father, as he was perhaps of the son. Hence, the letter must be dated the year 187 or 186 B. C., shortly after the death of Antiochus III. the Great, and not the year 162.

An apparently decisive objection is made against this date. Most critics maintain that the letter of the Jerusalem Jews had for its object to invite those of Egypt to come and join them in the celebration of the feast of the purification of the Temple, which

had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes. This feast having been instituted only in 164 B. C., the letter cannot be anterior to that time.

Were the general opinion founded, and were there really question here of the feast known under the name of Feast of Dedication (I. Mach. iv. 52-59; II. Mach. x. 1-8; John x. 22), the argument would be irrefutable; but whoever will read carefully, and with an unbiased mind, the letter of the Jews, will find that not one single word is said of the profanation of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes and of the expiatory feasts which Judas Machabeus celebrated after having purified it. The feast in which the Jews of Egypt are invited to join, is expressly stated by the letter, the feast of the discovery of the sacred fire by Nehemias: *Therefore, whereas we purpose to keep the purification of the temple on the five and twentieth day of the month of Casleu, we thought it necessary to signify it to you, that you also may keep the day of Scenopegia (Tabernacles), and the day of the fire, that was given when Nehemias offered sacrifice, after the temple and the altar was built* (II. Mach. i. 18). Can one desire anything more categorical and more conclusive? After the foregoing words, the letter relates at length the history of the discovery of the sacred fire by Nehemias and all that has reference to it, and it concludes, saying: *As we are then about to celebrate the purification, we have written unto you: and you shall do well, if you keep the same days* (of festival, II. Mach. ii. 16). Consequently, it follows from this that the feast they were about to celebrate in Jerusalem on the twenty-fifth of Casleu is not that which Judas the Machabee instituted in expiation of the profanation of the Temple, of which there is no question, but that of the discovery of the sacred fire. The text teaches us why it is called "purification," *katharismos*; it is because Jeremias had made use of water from the well where the sacred fire had been hidden "to purify what served for sacrifices" (II. Mach. i. 33), and because he had given to the place itself where the miracle of the sacred fire was effected, the name of "Nephtar," which is interpreted: Purification, *katharismos* (II. Mach. i. 36).

Finally, a last objection brought against the explanation we have given, is that Judas the Machabee is one of the authors of the letter. Now, Judas the Machabee, was at the head of the Jews only from the year 166 until the year 161. Consequently,

the letter could have been written only between the year 166 and the year 161, and not about the year 186, as we have said.

This reasoning would be unanswerable were it proved that the name of Judas the Machabee is contained in the writing of the Jerusalem Jews, but this is not the case. We read in the signature of the letter: *The people, . . . the senate and Judas* (II. Mach. i. 10). It is supposed that this Judas is the Machabee. At first sight the supposition is very plausible, for the personage of this name is best known in history and is most spoken of in the Second Book of Machabees. However, if it is well established, as we believe to have demonstrated, that Antiochus of whom the Jews and Judas speak, is Antiochus the Great, it follows that the supposition is false, and that this Judas is not the Machabee; for a disputed hypothesis cannot overthrow a truth solidly proved. Besides, the author of the Second Book of Machabees seems to indicate himself, that the Judas of whom it speaks is not the son of Mathathias: after having quoted the letter where the name of Judas is read (II. Mach. ii. 14), a few lines further on, he commences his own account by saying: *Now as concerning Judas Machabeus* (II. Mach. ii. 20). This addition of the epithet Machabeus seems to indicate that there is question of a Judas different from the one we are speaking of.

But who was this Judas they ask? In fact we are not obliged to know and to explain. We have such meager accounts about this time that no one need be astonished if we are ignorant of who such or such a personage was, if we know only his name. These cases are not rare. If the ecclesiastical authors had not taught us that Aristobolus, named in the same verse as Judas, had written on the Pentateuch, we would know nothing about him, for Josephus has not mentioned him in his works. Hence, there is nothing surprising in not knowing the history of this Judas, although he has played a certain rôle. The ignorance of the fact cannot overthrow the rest of the thesis, and one has no right to conclude that a writer has committed grave historical errors because he speaks of a personage who, having lived about 200 years B. C., is not mentioned in his account. For many centuries we knew only the name of Sargon, King of Ninive, on account of a cursory word given by Isaias (xx. 1). As this indication was an isolated one, several scholars denied the existence of that monarch. They were wrong. We know to-day that this personage, unknown for

a long time, was one of the greatest kings of Assyria. Several other persons mentioned in the Books of Machabees are equally known to us, only by name and from these books.

In passing now to the objections made against the body of the account of the Second Book of Machabees, which is a summary of the history of Jason of Cyrene, the first we meet relates to the martyrdom of the seven Machabee brothers. Antiochus Epiphanes was not so cruel as the account pretends, they tell us, and he could not have been present at the execution of the seven brothers at Jerusalem, because he was at Antioch at that time.

The First Book of Machabees, the testimony of which is admitted by everybody, teaches us that Antiochus Epiphanes decreed the penalty of death on all, who would observe the Jewish law (I. Mach. i. 52); moreover, the order which he gave to Lysias, in departing for Persia, to destroy and root out Israel, and to annihilate even its name, shows his vehement anger against the Jews (iii. 34-36). How can one pretend that the author of the Second Book of Machabees caluminates such a king, in describing the torments which he inflicted on the seven martyrs?

But, it is added, the Seleucide king was then at Antioch, and consequently could not assist at their execution in the city of Jerusalem.

According to the most common opinion of the Churches of the East and West, the scene of the martyrdom took place at Antioch, and an ancient tradition alone can explain why they transported far from Judea an event which one would place naturally at Jerusalem. But if we refuse to admit this tradition, it does not follow necessarily that Antiochus was not at Jerusalem during the martyrdom of the seven Machabee brothers. Although the author had said before (II. Mach. v. 21) that the king had returned to Antioch, it may be supposed that (vii. 1), without stating it explicitly, he came back. This style of writing is common to all authors (cf. II. Mach. vii. 1-42; viii. 1-36; ix. 1).

The second difficulty, and one of the most serious, which is offered by the Second Book of Machabees, is that which concerns the letters of Antiochus V. Eupator (163-162 B. C.) and of Lysias. We read in the First Book of Machabees: *So King Antiochus* (IV. Epiphanes), *died there, in the year 149* (in the era of the Seleucides, 163 B. C.). *And Lysias understood that the king was dead and he set up Antiochus* (V. Eupator) *his son to reign* (I. Mach. vi. 16-17). In the Second Book of Machabees (xi), they quote

letters of Antiochus V. already reigning, after the death of his father, and of Lysias his tutor. Now these letters are dated from the year 148 of the era of the Seleucides; that of Antiochus V. indicates, moreover, as the time of its authorship, the fifteenth of the so-called Xanthic month, that is, the sixth month of the Syro-Macedonian year called Nisan (March).

Various scholars, and Froelich in particular, have shown that the author of the Second Book of Machabees commences the year six months later than the author of the First Book; because the latter, writing in Hebrew, follows the Jewish calendar, the first month of which corresponds to the sixth Macedonian month, whilst the former, writing in Greek, follows the Macedonian calendar, according to which the first month, *Dios*, commences in October. This different manner of counting produces a certain confusion in the minds of those who do not pay attention to it; but it explains the most of the chronological difficulties they have raised against the Second Book of Machabees, and in particular the apparent contradiction between the year of the death of Antiochus IV., which was the year 149, according to the First Book of Machabees, and the arrival of Antiochus V., which took place in the year 148, according to the Second Book. It follows from the date of the letter of Antiochus V., dated the Xanthic month 148, that his father was dead at the commencement of the month, the Hebrew Nisan or sixth Macedonian month 148, according to the chronology of the First Book of Machabees which commences with this month the year 149 of the Seleucides. Hence, no serious objection can be made on this subject.

But the difficulty becomes more aggravating, where there is question of determining the date of the letter of Lysias. Chapter x. and the commencement of chapter xi. of the Second Book of Machabees relate, before reproducing the letters of Lysias and of Antiochus V., different battles won by the Machabees against the generals of the new king Antiochus V., and against Lysias himself, victories so important that Lysias and his king write to the Jews for terms of peace. Now, the letter of Lysias, written in the reign of Antiochus V., is dated the twenty-fourth Dioscor, 148, that is, between October and November, and consequently, it seems to be anterior by more than three months to the death of Antiochus IV., which cannot be the case.

Father Froelich solves the objection by remarking that Oriental historians do not always adhere in their exposition to the chrono-

logical order of facts. "Whoever will read carefully chapter xi. of the Second Book of Machabees will notice, I believe", he says, "that we have here an inversion of this kind, and that the letter of Lysias and the letters of Antiochus Eupator were not written at the time in which they are placed in the account. In fact the month of Dioscor of the year 148, the date of the letter of Lysias, in whatever moment one may place it, could not precede the Xanthic month of this same year, which was the first of the reign of Antiochus Eupator, and during which he wrote these letters. Therefore, we must find in the Xanthic month and the letters, place and time, which have a sufficient interval for the fulfillment of the events related. . . . (For this, it is sufficient to displace the letter of Lysias, and to admit that it is six months posterior to the letters of Antiochus Eupator.) It is manifest from the two Books of Machabees, that at the moment of the death of Antiochus IV. and of the arrival of Antiochus V. Eupator, the war had attained its full violence and had been favorable to the Jews. Now, who does not know that new princes, in mounting the throne, neglect nothing to enjoy peace at the beginning of their reign? This is the reason why Antiochus V. wrote to the victorious Jews, the fifteenth of Xanthic, at the beginning of his reign, to invite them to subscribe to a peace which would be advantageous to them, and to effect this, he gave orders to Lysias, who was absent from court at that time. The very words which Antiochus addresses to Lysias prove this: *Our father being translated amongst the gods, we are desirous that they that are in our realm should live quietly*, etc. (II. Mach. xi. 23). Hence he concludes peace with the Jews at the commencement of his reign, in the Xanthic month of the year 148. At that time,—the sacred historian relates the fact in the same place with the arrival of Antiochus V.,—Ptolemy Macer or Macron, prefect of Judea and of Phœnicia, a just man, conducted himself peaceably in regard to the Jews. Peace, therefore, put an end to the recent combats. But this peace cannot have been of long duration on account of the criminal conduct of Lysias. The latter persecuted Ptolemy Macer in such a manner that he forced him to poison himself. Lysias, tutor of the king, succeeded him in his command; he violated the peace and renewed the war through Gorgias (II. Mach. x. 10-16). These events probably took place in the month of Artemisius (April). From the middle of the month of Artemisius

until the twentieth of Dioscor, intercalated after the month of Hyperberety (September), there is space of time sufficient to place the different combats fought with the neighboring nations. After the defeat of the other generals of Antiochus Eupator, Lysias had time to come with a select troop of his army and be beaten. Hence, it was during this half year, I believe, when those glorious events for the Jews took place and which are related in the Second Book of Machabees, chapters x and xi, and we can place to about the following year of the Greeks, 149, the military events of which there is question in the First Book of Machabees, in the second part of chapter v and the Second Book in chapter xii. Finally, Lysias, conquered anew by the Jews at the commencement of autumn, the same Syro-Macedonian year 148 nearing its end, that is, the twentieth of the embolismic month of Dioscor, the last month of the year, was obliged to ask for peace by his letter. Thus, the whole seems to be in perfect accord and the difficulty arising from the different messages disappear completely without our being obliged to do violence to the text.

"Thus, to sum up, Antiochus IV. died in the Syro-Macedonian year 148, the Xanthic month or month of Nisan having commenced; this is why the First Book of Machabees, according to its manner of counting, dates this event from the year 149. Antiochus V. surnamed Eupator, son of Antiochus IV., succeeded him immediately, and wishing to mark the beginning of his reign by peace, he wrote his letters on this subject to Lysias and to the Jews, on the fifteenth of the Xanthic month of the Syro-Macedonian year 148. Ptolemy Macer, a partisan of peace, poisoned himself shortly afterwards, towards the month of Artemisius; Lysias succeeded him in the government of Phœnicia and Judea and peace was established; the war lasted six years; Lysias being overcome after his generals, was forced to ask anew for peace in his letter to the Jews, dated the twentieth of the embolismic month of Dioscor, the last of the year 148 of the Syro-Macedonians" (Froelich, *Annales compendiarii regum Syriae* pp. 26-28).

All the other objections raised against the Second Book of Machabees are of little importance, and do not merit discussion.

There are some improbabilities or exaggerations, for instance, they say in the number of enemies killed in the combats fought by the Jews against the Syrian armies (II. Mach. viii. 24, 30; x. 23, 31; xi. 11; xii. 19, 26, 28; xv. 27). As to the alleged improb-

able facts, criticism cannot prove in any manner its right to reject them as apocryphal facts. That the inhabitants of Joppe drowned Jews in the sea (II. Mach. xii. 3-4), surely is possible. That Razias killed himself rather than fall into the hands of his enemies (xiv. 37-46), is perfectly credible. As to the number of the dead who perished in the battles, one may admit, if he will, that the figures have been increased by the copyists, in this book as in several others.

Finally another objection made against the Second Book of Machabees is absolutely false. The sacred author states that the Jews were forced to celebrate "every month" (vi. 7) the anniversary of the birth of Antiochus Epiphanes. On this subject Grimm says:

"Every month means that if the king, for example, was born on the sixth of Xanthic, the sixth day of the other eleven months was also celebrated as his birthday. We find nowhere an example of a similar ordinance, and it can hardly be believed that such a decree was published by Antiochus Epiphanes. This also explains the omission 'every month' by the Vulgate, although this reading is found in all the Greek manuscripts, in that of Theodoret and in the Syriac version. It seems to me that the sacred historian has mixed up and confounded what concerned the annual celebration of the king's birthday with what had reference to the sacrifice of the twenty-fifth of each month, of which the First Book of Machabees speaks" (W. Grimm, *Handbuch zu den Apokryphen*, Vol. IV. pp. 110-111).

In reality, the author of the Second Book of Machabees has nothing mixed or confounded; he was well acquainted with the facts. The accusation made against the sacred author is, on the contrary, a proof of his accuracy. Examples of similar ordinances are existing, however extraordinary they may appear. It has been proven that the king of Syria did not content himself with an annual anniversary, but that he prescribed a monthly anniversary. The custom of monthly anniversaries was, indeed, a constant one with the successors of Alexander. We find the same custom in Egypt (*Decree of Canope*, i. 26), at Pergamum (*Hermes*, 1873, p. 115), finally with the last successors of the Seleucides, the Antiochus of Commagene (O. Hamdy-Bey, *The tumulus of Nemroud-dagh*, col. iii. 1, 115). Therefore, it cannot be questioned that the kings of Syria had also monthly anniversaries.

DIDACTIC AND SAPIENTIAL BOOKS

CHAPTER I

THE BOOK OF JOB

I. HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE BOOK OF JOB.—The Book of Job is one of the most beautiful monuments of literature and an ideal Semitic poem. But is this magnificent poem a history or a fiction? The Church has always believed in the real existence of the Arabian patriarch. Some ancient Rabbis have maintained, on the contrary, that the Book of Job is only a long parable, and the personage whose trials it relates had no real existence. In our days, a certain number of Rationalists also claim that the poem of Job is a fiction, like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. They even see in it the work of several hands, as in the writings of Homer. To believe them the prologue, and the conclusion, are posterior additions. The discourses of Eliu, they say, are not authentic and form no part of the primitive poem.

It is generally admitted by Catholic commentators that the Book of Job has been embellished with poetic ornaments, but all are agreed in acknowledging its foundation as historic. Scripture itself teaches this, when it gives us Job as a model of patience, in the prophet *Ezekiel* (xiv. 14, 20), in the Book of *Tobias* (ii. 12) and in the Epistle of St. James (v. 11). Nothing in the biblical account warrants us in denying the real existence of the holy patriarch of Idumea. A discussion of this subject will readily prove this point.

All the details of the history of Job have no probability it is stated. That the misfortunes of Job are not within the usual province of human ills no one will deny. But "if the case of Job is most extraordinary in every sense that one can imagine, the

lesson that is sought to be drawn from it is applicable to all other cases." It is Mr. Reuss himself who makes this remark. God permits his servant to be subjected suddenly to the most grievous trials, in order that his example may justify more manifestly His Providence and that the lesson may be more significant.

Infidels see contradictions between the Job of the prologue and the Job of the discussion. As much as the one is resigned, we are told, so much is the other impatient, almost blasphemous: an evident proof that the poet fashions the personage at will and does not even pretend to make him consistent with himself. These accusations are very unjust, and it is Mr. Reuss himself who furnishes their refutation:

"Job, the pious and just man is put on trial, and history tells us that he sustained it. He is oppressed by pain; but he remains firm and faithful, not only in face of his personal misfortunes, but also, and what is greater, in face of the suspicions of his life-long friends who accuse him of hypocrisy and who treat him very uncharitably. From them and their unjust judgment he always appeals to God; he does not cease to address himself to the One who alone can justify and console him. When doubt comes to assail him, he combats and triumphs over it; and when momentarily he appears to give way to despair, it is solely because he believes God whom he seeks and whom he invokes does not wish to hear him. There is not in this, indeed, any trace of incredulity, of an impious denial. On the contrary, at the very moment, when the thought of his misery torments him most vividly, when he complains most bitterly of being abandoned, forgotten, despised by those who were his best friends, his faith shows itself most gloriously immovable, and he expresses the conviction that God will restore his name, were this even only after death. Hence, the really pious man will emerge victoriously from the trial when he has to do with God alone, and when he does not permit the prejudiced utterances of others to disconcert and mislead him. He recognizes that God does not desire his misfortune, but that He permits it with the intention indicated. . . . Also Job towards the end recovers his moral equilibrium, his tranquillity of mind, as soon as his adversaries are silenced; and, in lamenting his lot, and in protesting his innocence, he expresses himself in a manner so touching that the reader, who might have been shocked at

certain too vehement expressions, returns without difficulty to his first sentiments" (Ed. Reuss, *Job*, 24).

The friends of Job are also real personages and not fictitious. Reuss comes again to prove this: "They are three," he says, "but they do not represent three philosophic systems or three different solutions; they do not even place themselves at three different points of view, as is generally the case in our dramas where each personage has his particular rôle. The most we can say is, that one of them speaks with more moderation, the others with passion and vehemence; in the main they say the same thing. . . . The discourses of the three friends are replete with repetitions. It is constantly the same topic: God punishes the wicked; misfortune is the punishment of sin; men are not wiser than God. . . . On his side, Job also returns continually to his protestation of innocence; he always affirms that he has not merited his lot. . . . The author describes this, not as a philosopher would do, producing thesis after thesis and demonstrating them by a logical and connected argumentation so as to approach insensibly his end, and to finish by forcing his conclusions upon his readers. He puts into the scene living personages; each one having his convictions and prejudices. They do not come to an understanding; what one affirms the other denies, and no decision is arrived at, either as to the cause of Job's sufferings or the means which he should adopt to alleviate them" (*Opus cit.* pp. 17-18). These personages are, therefore, living, and they are living because they are real.

The improbability of the epilogue is especially insisted on, according to which God gives to the just Job double what he possessed before the trial; twice the number of sheep, camels, oxen, and asses, and as many sons and daughters. But what is there impossible in this? In every epoch we meet with singularities, not less improbable. The descent of Hugh Capet has given successively to France three branches of kings; each of them was extinguished with three brothers who reigned one after another. Were we to meet a similar fact in sacred history, critics would not fail to cry out that it was impossible and improbable, and the credulity and simplicity of people who believed such an assertion should be pitied, etc., but the truth would be none the less incontestable.

It is the same with the restoration of the fortune of Job. Rationalists ought to drop this argument drawn from the im-

probability of the facts, to which they have recourse too often, and which cannot be presented as a scientific proof. Besides, we have to remark that, in the present case God owed it to Himself and He owed it to His servant, since He merely caused him to undergo a trial and since he withstood the trial successfully, to reward him for his fidelity and constancy. Now, as the scene takes place before the coming of Christ and as the gate of heaven had not yet been opened through the blood of the Redeemer; as remuneration in another life is as yet enveloped in shadows, the reward of Job could be only a temporal and earthly one. Rationalists themselves admit this: "The philosophical question having taken body in a person, the claims of the moral sentiment must be satisfied through the history of this person. . . . If Job had died unfortunate all the beautiful things, discussed in this book, would have produced an effect opposite to that which the author had in view. And since, after all, God can always intervene in the destinies of mortals even the miracle which is wrought at the end in regard to that of Job, renders substantial a consolation capable at least of upholding the courage of those who suffer under the same conditions" (Ed. Reuss, *Job*, p. 23). Providence had to intervene, and its direct and visible intervention explains what is unusual in the nature of the reward.

The critical spirit is so punctilious that it even finds fault with the names which Job gives to his daughters after the return of his fortune. Because they are borrowed from graceful objects, it is concluded that they must have been "wilfully forged by the poet." Who, however, somewhat familiar with Oriental customs, does not know that similar names are there quite ordinary and common? Job calls his three daughters, the first, Iemimâh, in Arabic "the dove," on account of her dove-like eyes; the second Quesiâh, because she appears like one enveloped with the perfume of "cannell," and the third Qeren-happuk, from the name of the principal cosmetic of feminine beauty, because her beauty must have become still greater by art (Job xlii. 14). The Greeks would have compared them to the three Graces; Job compares them to the most beloved objects of the Orientals, and he names them accordingly. Even in the present day, in Arabia and in Persia, women are named from graceful animals, perfumes, flowers, and precious stones, and it is not seldom that we hear young girls named, as they are

in the *Thousand and One Nights*: Garden-Flower, Coral-Branch, Sugar-Cane, Day-Light, Morning-Star, etc.

Hence, the Book of Job is historical, as a whole and in its principal details, in spite of the poetic frame in which it is placed and the literary ornaments by which it is embellished. As to the date when it was written, this is a mere matter of discussion and we have not, consequently, any need to bring it into this inquiry, except to point out an error maintained, however, only by a small number of critics. We know the subject of the book is the problem of good and evil in the world and Satan appears in the prologue of the poem as an evil spirit and tempting demon. Some Rationalists have made this a pretext to maintain that the entire work was inspired by Mazdeism or doctrine of the two principles, and, consequently, that it dates from the time of the preëminence of of the Persians in western Asia, that is, in a time posterior to the Babylonian Captivity.

"At first sight" says Mgr. Harlez, "the analogy seems striking, but when we closely examine the Hebrew text it becomes evident that the author of the history of Job did not know Mazdeism, or at least, which is the same thing, wrote as if he had neither any knowledge thereof nor been under its influence; for all in his book is opposed to this, as the characters of Satan and of Ahri-man. . . . In (Job), Satan is only a subordinate agent, entirely dependent on the will of God, acting only within the limits traced by God, powerless to oppose His desires or to hinder the reparation of the evils which God permitted him to cause. . . . Behold, on the contrary Anromainyus (Ahriman) in face of the Creator. In the Vendidad xxii we read: 'Ahura-Mazda says to St. Zarathrusta: "I, Ahura-Mazda, . . . when I created this dwelling of beauty and splendor, the criminal Deva looked at me. Anromainyus the murderer created against me 99,999 evils. Heal me, therefore, O Manthra-Cpenta to pure brightness. In return, I will give to thee a thousand horses, a thousand oxen, a thousand camels," etc. Manthra-Cpenta (the holy law or formulæ of conjuration) answered: "How shall I heal thee of these evils?" Then Ahura-Mazda said to Nairyocanha: "O wise Nairyocanha, go and call Aryaman and tell him that Anromainyus overwhelms me with 99,999 evils. . . ." Aryaman went right away; he brought a new race of male horses, of young camels, a new kind of fodder,

and drew nine furrows in order to combat the evils caused by the chief of the Devas.' We do not need to remark that the scene is entirely metamorphosed. God is no longer that all-powerful master who sets limits to the action of the devil which the latter does not dare to transgress; he is an uncrowned king, so to say, trembling before a rival who has robbed him of the half of his empire and who strikes creatures at will. Anromainyus, equal to God by his eternal origin, does not acknowledge his laws, and destroys his works whenever he pleases. Whenever Ahura-Mazda creates a good, Anromainyus follows him to produce there an evil capable of annihilating the divine work. . . . Therefore, everything concurs in making us reject the supposition of a loan from Judea to Eran in regard to the belief in demons" (C. de Harlez, *Les Origines de Zoroastrisme*).

We have, on the one hand, among the Persians, dualism and the belief in two equal and hostile principles, and on the other, among the Hebrews monotheism and the belief in one sole principle, God, the master of heaven and earth.

II. AUTHENTICITY OF THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BOOK OF JOB.—Let us establish now the authenticity of the parts of the Book of Job which are contested or denied by infidels, that is, the prologue and epilogue, the discourses of Eliu and the description of the hippopotamus and crocodile.

In regard to the parts in prose which serve as an introduction and conclusion to the work, infidels themselves acknowledge that we cannot separate them from the body of the book and that, consequently, they have always been attached to it.

But, if the prologue and epilogue are authentic with the less extreme Rationalists, nearly all denounce the discourses of Eliu as an interpolation of a much later date. Here are the reasons which Nöldecke gives:

"All the interpreters of renown in our time, and even Delitzsch, have acknowledged that this part of the book is not authentic. . . . This piece does not agree with the general plan. If we cut it off, everyone will see that the book of Job, nevertheless, remains complete. The poet Elihu reproves in Job faults of which the primitive poet had no suspicion. What God reproaches Job with is quite different from what Elihu blames in him. The

forcible words of the Lord, who permits the wonders of creation to speak for him, are very much weakened by Elihu who brings forward in support of his remonstrances simple rational motives. And nevertheless, in the mind of the poet, Elihu must be right, for Job cannot answer him. . . . Let us add that Elihu is named neither in the prologue nor in the epilogue. At the end, God speaks to Job and to the three friends, each one receives the decision that concerns him, but there is nothing said of Elihu." (*Literarische Geschichte des A. T.*)

It is true that Eliu is neither named in the prologue nor in the epilogue, but the reason is simply because the author had no reason to name him. The rule which he follows is to mention nobody who is not directly interested in the part of the narrative related. It is thus that the brothers of Job are named accidentally in one of his discourses; his parents are mentioned for the first time in the last chapter. The poet speaks of the friends of Job at the beginning, to show that they came to console him, and at the end, to show that the reproaches which they made to the sufferer were without foundation, in the judgment of God Himself; but Eliu was not a friend of Job, he was simply an assistant in the discussion, whose presence did not need to be indicated, a young man who, in accordance with Oriental custom, remained in the background observing silence, whilst those older than himself were speaking; when asked for his opinion he entered into the debate. Moreover, Eliu, different in this respect from Eliphaz, Baldad, and Sophar, states only what is just and true, and consequently in the conclusion, the author has nothing to find fault with in his discourses, as Job has nothing to reply to him, because he cannot deny the correctness of his arguments. He is the only one of the speakers named that was right in his judgment of Job. The objections made against his rôle are European or American objections, which would never have occurred to the mind of an Oriental. The latter do not care about having the last word. When they have nothing more of importance to say, they keep silence.

Very far, however, from not fitting in with the "general plan," an interpolation without which the poem "would nevertheless remain complete," the discourses of Eliu round out the justification of Providence, such as might be given before the law of grace; they develop a new explanation which could be placed neither in

the mouths of the friends of Job nor in the mouth of God, namely, the usefulness of suffering to purify man and to instruct him. The three friends of Job maintain that, if he is afflicted, it is because he has merited all his suffering as a chastisement. Job protests against this accusation; he affirms his innocence with the greatest energy, and the conclusion resulting from his statements is, that he does not know why God afflicts him, because he has no fault to reproach himself with. God will not tell him, because He will not demean Himself to justify His conduct before man; He will content Himself with crushing him under the weight of His majesty and the splendor of His magnificence. Pope justly reproached Milton for having been wanting in respect towards God and for having been guilty of bad taste in putting into His mouth these arguments. The Book of Job does not commit this mistake. God speaks as a master, and what should have been said by the friends of the unhappy Job, is said by Eliu. The latter reveals to the holy patriarch the secret of his trials, in showing to him in the affliction a means of purifying and perfecting himself. Thus the intervention of Eliu is far from being useless and inexplicable. Without his discourses, the thesis of justification of Providence, which is the subject of the poem, would be incomplete and imperfect. In showing how God permits afflictions to be visited upon the just man to make him watchful against sin when he has not fallen, or, if he has fallen, to excite him to repentance, Eliu sets forth truths of the greatest importance and of the greatest practical usefulness. It is not true that all suffering is the chastisement of crime, as the friends of Job maintained; but neither can we agree with Job that God is unjust when He visits afflictions upon the innocent, since it is for the good of the just that God permits the one who has not offended Him to be afflicted.

The foundation of the discourses of Eliu is, therefore, far from furnishing a proof that they are not authentic. Does the style authorize infidels to maintain that they are an interpolation? This is what they pretend:

"From the point of view of the language and style, a great difference exists between this piece and the primitive poem. The poet Elihu did not fail to inspire himself with the old poet, he borrowed from him more than one expression and image, but, in the details as a whole, he is quite a different person. A mass of

favorite words and expressions recur continually in the discourses of Elihu, expressions found neither in the Old Testament nor in Job himself. The style is more diffuse, or less concise, than in the authentic Job. The long exordiums in which Elihu announces that he wishes to speak, that he is going to reveal wisdom, etc., without entering into the subject, are unquestionably marks of inferiority, when we think of the old poet. The first discourse of Elihu, in particular, is almost entirely void of ideas. The introduction in prose is also of quite another narrative style than the parts of Job equally in prose. The poetic value of the discourses of Elihu is evidently much inferior to that of the real Job. However, these portions are not without merit" (Th. Nöldecke, *Opus cit.*).

The answer to these objections is easy. Let us observe, first, that what they tell us about the difference of style is exaggerated. Even those who deny the authenticity of the discourses of Eliu are forced to admit similarities of expression between these discourses and those of the rest of the book, and they tell us that the interpolator has tried to equal the primitive poet "by imitating as much as possible the style of his model" (Ed. Reuss, *Job*, p. 27). This avowal is a proof that the language of this portion of the poem does not greatly differ from the rest. Charles Budde who has studied at length and most carefully, word by word, the discourses of Eliu, has come to the conclusion that "the authenticity of the discourses of Eliu, from the linguistic point of view, is perfectly possible."

We do not say, however, that there are no differences at all between the style of Eliu and that of Job and of his friends; in fact there must be. Eliu is a young man, and he speaks as a young man, conformably to his character. We remark in his language something of the presumption and verbiage of youth, and what is more natural? If it were not thus, could we not justly reproach the sacred author with introducing on the scene a personage who does not speak as he should? The style of Eliu, far from being an argument against the authenticity of his discourses, is therefore, on the contrary, an argument in their favor.

"Another piece" says Reuss, "which has not found favor with a good many contemporary critics, is the description of the hippo-

potamus and crocodile.* They have found it strikingly different in style and form, when compared with the beautiful little pictures of animal life in the Arabian deserts as presented in the preceding section. But what they mostly insist upon is that it is extraneous and perfectly superfluous. In fact, after the long discourse of Jehovah (Job xxxviii. and xxxix.), which is the most beautiful page of the book, Job acknowledges that he was wrong in becoming impatient and wishing to criticize Providence; he humbly bows down before God's majesty. Why then does God return to the same charge, by making use of the same interpretation as the first time, by even being more severe in His words? Has He new arguments to bring forth? Does He call the attention of the mortal to another series of demonstrations? Does He open to him some new horizon? No, He describes two beasts, and with a profusion of details which contrasts with the sobriety of the other pictures, otherwise described with such a fullness of life. This, it is said, can be only the work of an imitator who had seen the frightful guests of the Nile" (Ed. Reuss, *Job*, p. 28).

Thus also speak Stuhlmann, Bernstein, and de Wette, who consider these passages as partly interpolated; Eichorn and Ewald reject them as apocryphal in their entirety. It can be seen that the arguments brought forth against the authenticity of the description of the hippopotamus and of the crocodile are about the same as those which they allege against the authenticity of the discourses of Eliu. But the most of the Rationalists, who judge these arguments good against Eliu, find them without force against the discourse of Jehovah, because they have no interest in condemning the latter passage.

* Job xl-xli. Behemoth and Leviathan, these two extraordinary animals of whose real nature critics were so long ignorant, are to-day universally recognized as the hippopotamus and the crocodile.

CHAPTER II

THE PSALMS

I. AUTHENTICITY OF THE PSALMS.—Negative criticism, which overthrows everything and tries to do away with the best established traditions, takes hold even of the Psalter, and if it does not dare to rob King David completely of his poetic and prophetic crown, it attempts at least to tear off most of the ornaments. "From what epoch does the Psalter date?" asks Reuss. . . . "Many of our readers," he answers, "will be astonished to see us raising this question. For them, the answer is given beforehand. It is David, the king of Israel, who is the author of the Book of Psalms. Tradition wishes it so. . . . Our old Bibles with woodcuts do not fail to represent this prince in the front of the Book, covered with his royal mantle, wearing the crown and playing the harp. We have to enter some serious exceptions to the subject of this tradition" (*The Psalter*).

The exceptions of M. Reuss are so serious, indeed, that we do not know what Psalms he still leaves to King David, or even whether he leaves any to him. He avoids being precise, because precision would be too troublesome, but he denies in detail to the prophet king the authorship of the sacred chants which the titles attribute to him, and he refers almost all our liturgical poems to the time of the Machabees: "We are involuntarily led to believe," he says, "that many of our Psalms date from the epoch of the Macedonian domination, from the wars of the Ptolemies and Seleucides, who disputed the possession of Palestine, from the persecutions of Antiochus of Epiphanes and from the patriotic insurrection of the Machabees. . . . We do not pretend to *prove* that (this hypothesis) is applicable to all the Psalms, at least to the four last books (of the Psalter); but we believe that there are not many who will contradict this directly. In any case, there are very few which one has to put back, necessarily and unquestionably, to an epoch anterior to the Exile (or Babylonian Captivity)" (Ed. Reuss, *Opus cit.*).

Nor does Nöldecke wish to admit that we have any chants of David in the Psalter. "It is well established," he says, "that the

tradition according to which David would have composed all the Psalms or a great number among them, is indefensible. . . . I regard as perfectly authentic only the poems given under the name of David in the Second Book of Kings," which are not Psalms.

We are certainly very far from maintaining that the one hundred and fifty Psalms contained in the Psalter are all from David. At all times, in spite of some exceptions, it has been acknowledged that they have not all come from his pen, as is attested by the very inscriptions of these poems which attribute their composition to various authors; and if a common custom has placed under his name, for simplification, even some Psalms that are certainly not from him, if we commonly say "the Psalter of David," it is because this great king is the principal author thereof, the most famous of all, the model of the others. We will not dispute that various commentators have wrongly attributed to him sacred chants to which he can have no right; but what is contrary to justice and truth is to refuse to him the composition of all or of the most of the Psalms that have come down to us under his name.

Tradition has always considered David as the Psalmist par excellence, the *egregius psalter Israel*, according to the title which he justly bestowed upon himself (II. Ki. xxiii. 1) and if it has been deceived on points of detail, in the inscriptions of some Psalms, for instance, it has not been deceived as to the foundation itself. "That David was a poet and musician, cannot be questioned by anybody. His history is partly based on this fact (I. Ki. xvi. 18, etc.), and we possess even outside the Psalter, different poems that are attributed to him (II. Ki. i. 17, etc.; iii. 33, etc.), and in regard to which the most exacting criticism does not make the least objection. Again we know from the testimony of one of the most ancient Hebrew authors (Amos vi. 5), that his fame had lost nothing of its brightness more than two centuries after his death. . . . In the first century, we see that the authors of the New Testament quote passages from various Psalms under the name of David." It is Reuss who thus speaks.

The negation of infidel criticism might have something surprising, and we might ask ourselves how it can dare to contradict so well established a tradition as that of the Davidical origin of a part of the Psalms, if it were not so easy to discover the motive that prompts it to maintain this desperate thesis. The needs of the

cause constrain it to act thus. Here, as in so many other cases, they deny because they are forced to deny, under pain of admitting the authenticity of the Pentateuch, which they refuse to do at any price. The chants of David prove that the writings of Moses existed in his time. Therefore, according to these critics, they cannot have been composed by David.

But they cannot help acknowledging that David enjoyed at all times the reputation of a poet, and that this title rendered him the most popular in Israel. Who, therefore, could be persuaded that none or hardly any of his chants were preserved? How can we explain that the Jews collected with such great care the Psalms of the other Psalmists, and that they permitted to perish those of the most celebrated of all?

Finally, these critics disingenuously discuss the Davidical origin of some Psalms whose authenticity, in regard to their author, is more or less doubtful, and then, concluding from the particular to the general, contrary to all rules of logic, they assure us that, since these Psalms are not from David, none of those attributed to him were composed by him. We might maintain just as well that Virgil wrote neither the *Bucolics*, nor the *Georgics*, nor the *Æneid*, because it is doubtful whether he wrote the *Culex*, the *Ciris* and the *Moretum*, which have come to us under his name.

They contest the accuracy of some of the inscriptions or titles placed at the head of the Psalms, and then they tell us: You see, the titles merit no confidence, hence no Psalm of David is left to us. But this is always the same sophism and the same absence of logic. Because certain titles are false or suspicious, it surely does not follow that they are all so.

The contents of the Psalms are one of the criteria of which criticism makes use to determine the epoch of their composition. "It is proper," says Reuss, "to examine the contents of the Psalms in order to find therein indications of their time or of their antiquity." And in fact, it is upon this that criticism relies to claim that a great number of our sacred chants date from the time of the Machabees, because it sees in them allusions to wars of this epoch and to the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Certainly it is very legitimate to make use of the subject treated in the Psalms to endeavor to fix the date of their composition, but on the condition that a prudent and moderate use is made of this

rule. The allusions to events are often very vague and may be suited to very different epochs; consequently, the abuse is very easy, and to prove this we need only to appeal to the testimony of Nöldecke, one of those who deny the Davidical origin of our Psalms.

"Modern criticism," he says, "has often sought to discover in the most ingenious manner the time and subject of some of these poems. Unfortunately these discoveries have not always given satisfaction except to their authors. If Ewald already surpasses very often the measure, Hitzig leaves him far behind, thanks to the subtileness of his mind which leads him almost always to results that are impossible or very improbable to the minds of everybody else. A sound and impartial criticism will admit here, as in many other questions in regard to the Old Testament, that many points are still covered with obscurity. I even claim that there are Psalms of which we cannot tell with certainty in what part of the long period, which extends from 900 to 160 B. C., they have been composed. If it happens sometimes that the uncertainty is not so complete, it is none the less true that almost always the possible time of the composition remains quite vague and indeterminate" (*Opus cit.*).

The truth of what Nöldecke says is so indisputable that Reuss himself is forced to make the following avowal: "First, we have to acknowledge that there is a certain number of anonymous or Davidical Psalms—and partly the most beautiful—especially in what we have called the first class, which absolutely contain nothing that can serve to determine their age, which express general truths, sentiments natural to all pious souls, and of whose bearing and beauty one would risk the weakening, if he should insist on seeking in them allusions to particular events. . . . In regard to similar poems, it is impossible to tell to what century they belong, unless philological reasons, forms of language, throw a weight in the balance" (*The Psalter* p. 53).

Since such is the case, and since Reuss, as we shall see further on, is obliged to acknowledge that the style of the Psalms is an objection against his system instead of being a proof in its favor, why therefore condemn tradition and reject the titles which attribute to David the composition of these Psalms, "partly the most beautiful?" It is certainly doing so without any reason.

They also pretend to make use of the language to fix the date of the Psalms. Nöldecke answers again:

"The arguments borrowed from the language of the poem are of less help than might be supposed. The text which has been transmitted to us, in which the chant of Debora has exactly the same pronunciation as the literary productions composed in the time of the Machabees, and in which more than one expression, having become unintelligible in the course of time, had to be replaced by a more modern expression, a similar text, I say, does not permit us to obtain under this respect any great result."

Finally, a last criterion is the style. Nöldecke considers this the best. "The examination of the style," he says, "has quite another importance. There is quite a large number of poems for which criticism, even the most cautious, succeeds in determining pretty accurately the time of their composition."

Undoubtedly, the style is an element which we have to take into account, but it is certain that it cannot serve to prove that the Psalter contains no chants of David, for there is nothing deducible from it that is irreconcilable with this origin. Ruess acknowledges that the style is not favorable to the hypothesis of the Machabee origin of the Psalms. Here are his words: "The Psalms are written, generally, in a style we might call classic. With few exceptions, the Hebrew phraseology is that of the prophets, and we know, moreover, that in the time of the Machabees the popular language had changed a good deal, as can be seen by the books . . . of Esdras, for which we need a special dictionary and a particular grammar." Consequently, the Rationalistic opinion which pretends to refuse to David one of his most beautiful titles of glory and to put off until the second century B. C. the composition of a great part of our sacred chants, is not founded upon any solid foundation. That some Psalms were composed in the time of the Machabees is certainly not absolutely impossible. Theodoret, among the ancient ecclesiastical writers, has referred several Psalms to the persecutions of Antiochus, considering them, it is true, as prophecies. Some modern commentators, like Father Patrizi and Father Palmieri admit a few Machabean Psalms. The fact, however, is not proved at all, and it is certainly inadmissible for the most of the sacred chants which extreme Rationalists wish to place in this recent time; also, very keen critics do

not hesitate to express themselves against the so-called Machabean Psalms, and the most of them admit that the collection of the Psalms was already complete in the time of Esdras and Nehemias.

For the rest, it is enough to examine the Psalms which one might, at first sight, attribute with some probability to the time of the Machabees, in order to become convinced that they are more ancient. The three named by De Wette, as bearing a Machabean imprint, are the Psalms 44, 60, and 74 (Hebrew text). If we add the Psalm 79, we have the four chants which alone appear at first sight to present some allusions to the persecutions of the Seleucides. But it is surprising to find them in the midst of the Psalter, in the second and third book of the collection, not at the end, which does not indicate a recent origin. Also if we examine seriously their content, we perceive very soon that they are indeed anterior to the Greco-Macedonian epoch. The Psalm *Deus repulisti nos* (Ps. lx) has not only a title, which Rationalists reject without reason, and who attribute it to David in referring it to the victories won over the Syrians and Idumeans, but it speaks of Manasses, of Ephraim and of Juda (lx. 9): this distinction of the tribes did not exist in the second century B. C. Among the enemies conquered it quotes the Moabites and the Philistines (lx. 10); they had disappeared in the time of the Seleucides; as to the Seleucides themselves, there is no question of them.

The Psalm *Deus auribus nostris audivimus* (xliv.) bewails the misfortunes of Israel. If it had been written after the Captivity, the absence of all allusion to this event would be inexplicable. In Psalm *Ut quid Deus repulisti in finem*, the sacred chanter complains that there is no longer any prophet (lxxiv. 9). This complaint would be natural in a time when they were accustomed to see prophets, but it does not explain itself in the time of the Machabees when prophetism had ceased two centuries since. Finally, in Psalm *Deus venerunt gentes in haereditatem tuam*, the allusions to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the Temple by Nabuchodonosor are so striking that Reuss cannot help saying: "The first verses might appear to refer to the sacking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans of Nabuchodonosor." Several verses of this Psalm are found word for word in Jeremias (Ps. lxxix. 6-7 and Jer. x. 25), and it is to about the time of this prophet that we must refer their composition.

II. OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE CONTAINED IN THE PSALMS.—The Psalms are distinguished by a great elevation of thought and sentiment, which have made them the Prayer Book par excellence. There are however two points which, not only in our time, but at all times, have furnished material for objections. They are, first, the imprecations which we read in these sacred chants against the enemies of the poet or of God's people and, second, the manner in which they speak of the future life. Here's what Stanley, the Rationalistic dean of Westminster, and Albert Reville, former pastor of the Wallonish church of Rotterdam, have to say about the imprecatory Psalms:

"The sentiments expressed by the Psalter are very diverse. It is not exempt from the faults of the Jewish system. The vindictive spirit of the old covenant does not break out with more fury, even in the wars of Josue and in the canticle of Debora, than in the imprecations of Psalms 69, 109, and 137 (according to the Hebrew). When Clovis nourished his barbarous soul from Psalm xviii. (39, 40), it was because he found therein the sparks of a fire similar to that which consumed him" (A. P. Stanley, *The Jewish Church*, Vol. II., p. 128).

"We can say in a general manner that what is most rare in the Psalms is pity for the adversary whether conquered or not. It is impossible to hate with more vehemence than did these pious chanters. It is from this that the Psalms betray their Jewish origin and that they have furnished texts and pretexts to the saddest excesses of Christian intolerance. There is question only of the extermination of their enemies, of the duty to crush them in the name of the Eternal, of the pleasure of returning to them at a premium the evil they may have done. The beautiful elegy uttered in Psalm cxxxvi. where the Psalmist depicts with heart-rending melancholy the children of Israel bewailing the lost country, having no longer heart to sing their hymns and having strung up their lyres on the river willows—that touching expression of the most tender patriotism ends with the following atrocious vow: '*O daughter of Babylon, miserable: Blessed shall he be who shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock*'" (A. Réville, *Le Psautier juif*).

This word-painting is pushed to the extreme and exaggerated, but, whatever extenuating circumstances we may allege, in the eyes

of certain critics the imprecations of the Psalms are scandalous and they insist that we must proscribe words so contrary to true religious sentiment.

The imprecations pronounced against the enemies of God's people cannot, however, offer any serious difficulty. The Psalms incriminated form two different categories. Those of the first invoke God's help against the enemies of His people; those of the second demand the chastisement of the sinners. Revenge, in so far as it is revenge, is condemned by the law of Moses, which the Psalms praise (Ps. xviii. 8-11). *Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens. Thou shalt love thy friend (neighbor) as thyself* (Lev. xix. 18; cf. Exod. xxiii. 4-5; Prov. xxv. 21; xx. 22, etc.). God, in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 35), reserves to Himself the right of revenge. It is in this sense that the Psalms say that the Lord is *the God of revenge* (Ps. xciii. 1), and that it is from Him that men hold the power to punish (xvii. 48). They are so little in contradiction with the other writings of the Old Testament that they forbid all personal desire of revenge, and tell us on the contrary: *Be not emulous of evil doers; nor envy them that work iniquity. Envy not the man who prospereth in his way; the man who doth unjust things. Cease from anger, and leave rage; have no emulation to do evil* (Ps. xxxvi. 1, 7, 8, cf. Ps. iii.).

The vindictive are ranked among the enemies of God and men (Ps. vii. 4; xliii. 17). Do the authors of the Psalms contradict these principles in practice? No. They ask first for the victory over their enemies in some of their chants; but is it not legitimate to invoke the power of heaven against unjust oppressors and impious tyrants? Who does not pray during a war for the defeat of the enemy? Therefore, there is nothing to reproach the Psalms with, as they express no sentiment of personal hatred and are only animated with an ardent feeling of patriotism (lxxxii.). The passage most attacked is that of Psalm: *Super flumina Babylonis* which ends with the following verses: *O daughter of Babylon, miserable: blessed shall he be who shall repay thee thy payment which thou hast paid us. Blessed he that shall take and dash thy little ones against the rock* (Ps. cxxxvi. 8-9).

Certainly the expressions are strong, but we must not forget that they depict the customs of the time (II. Ki. viii. 12; Osee x.

14)* and that the Psalmist asks for the application of the law of retaliation, admitted by the customs of that time. He desires that God should punish the oppressors of His people by inflicting upon them the evils which they had caused Israel to suffer, and he even asks for the death of the children, in order that that they may not become the persecutors of the servants of Jehovah, as their fathers have been.

A second category of the Psalms demands the chastisement of sinners. When it is horror of evil that forces from the Psalmist words of indignation, when he is shocked at the spectacle of the malice of men or filled with horror at the sight of the iniquity that outrages God without shame, his sentiments are those of the just man and saint, and cannot be blameworthy. Even when the Psalmist wishes evil to his personal enemies, he considers his enemies as those of God (cf. Ps. v. 11; lxxix. 9; x. 12-13; cix. 27; lviii. 12, Hebrew text).

Hence, the Psalmist always rises above personal interest; the motives which animate him are always drawn from religion and justice; it is not himself that he desires to see revenged, but the honor, glory, and majesty of God. All the critics are about agreed as to this subject: "The Psalmists sing what they have in their soul," says Réville, "but with the idea that the entire people chant with them. National individualism is still more absolute than personal individualism, and the enemy of the nation and the enemy of God were one and the same. The oppression of the chosen race was not only an iniquity, but was also a sacrilege" (*Le Psautier juif*).

We find, undoubtedly, that the language of the Psalms is sometimes very vehement, but we must not forget to appreciate it at its just value—that it is the language of poetry, and of Oriental poetry. In every country of the world the poet expresses himself with more animation, or, if you will, passion, than the writer in prose;

* Here is what Assurbanipal, King of Ninive, says in the account of his exploits:

84. Nabonidus and Beledir.

85. son of Nebozikiressestigenna,

86. whose father that had begotten them captured Urtaki

87. to combat with Accad,

88. the companions of Nebozikiresse, whom from the midst of Gambul

89. I transported into Assyria,

90. his companions,

91. before the great gate of Ninive,

92. I caused his children to be crushed. G. Smith, *History of Assurbanipal*, p. 138.

in the East, in particular, he is fond of hyperboles and of strong expressions. Anyone who has visited the East or is even familiar with the literature of that country, knows very well that these imprecatory formulæ do not produce on the people of the country the same effect as upon us cool Westerners. Language has always a relative value, and we have to interpret it according to the usages of the places where it is spoken. What we read in the Psalms is nothing in comparison to what the travelers hear every day in the streets of Cairo or Jerusalem. When one is not yet accustomed to these exaggerations of the people of the Levant, he becomes frightened at these explosions which appear to be the effect of the most violent hatred, but soon he will perceive that the natives do not attach the same importance to them as the stranger; a few moments afterwards they are again the best of friends; the storm is passed; heaven looks bright again, and they can sometimes be seen lavishing upon one another terms of tenderness not less exaggerated than the injuries and imprecations. What we read in the Psalms has not, therefore, in the eyes of the actual Orientals, the degree of violence the critics find therein. Nor had it this in the eyes of the contemporaries of David and of the other authors of the Psalms. The poet is always bound in a certain measure to speak the language of his time and country, for fear of not being appreciated and even of not being understood. Therefore, it would be very unjust to judge him according to our customs and habits and to require that a poet who lived under the Old Law should express himself just as if he had lived in our countries and after the promulgation of the Gospel.

This is another consideration upon which the Fathers have insisted a good deal and which, indeed, merits our full attention. Theodoret of Cyra, in concluding his explanation of the Psalm cxxxvii., makes the following remarks; "I admonish those who have read these things not to become scandalized at the prayers of the just man and not to draw any pretexts therefrom to wish evil to their enemies. We have to remember that the prophet lived under the Law and not under the Gospel. Now the Law commands us to love our neighbor and to hate our enemy. But our Saviour Jesus Christ, showing perfect virtue, tells us; *It has been said to those of old: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and thou shalt hate thy enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies and bless those that curse*

you. And, in accord with this language, the holy Apostle tells us: *Bless and do not curse.* Keeping account, therefore, of this difference, acknowledge what is becoming to the Law and what is becoming to grace" (In Ps. cxxxvii. 8-9).

We have to remark, however, that, although our Saviour Himself has pointed out this difference between the Old Law and the New Law, He understands it especially of the false interpretation which the Scribes and Pharisees made in His time. Moses commands the Israelites to love all men, and he often insists on the benevolence we should have especially for the stranger (Exod. xxiii. 4; Lev. xix. 17-18); but these false doctors restricted the commandment of love to the Jews and approved of the sentiments of hatred, the desires and acts of revenge against the Gentiles. Hence the words of Theodoret must be somewhat modified in order to be exact. However, it remains always true that the Gospel has perfected the ancient law and that the Saviour requires from the Christian more elevated, more noble, and more generous sentiments; He wishes that we detest evil, but not the person of the one that commits it. It is this which St. John Chrysostom has developed, when explaining this passage of the Psalms: *Have I not hated them, O Lord, that hated Thee. . . . I have hated them with a perfect hatred* (Ps. cxxxviii. 21, 22). "Now," he says, "there is required from us a more elevated philosophy. . . . Formerly . . . the Jews were ordered to hate not only impiety but also the impious, for fear that their friendship might become an occasion of error. God, therefore, interdicted to them all relation and connection with them, He surrounded them with a bulwark on all sides. But at present, because he has raised us to a more sublime philosophy and placed us above danger, He orders us to permit them to approach and to console them" (Hom. xxxiii. 4-5 in I Cor. xiii.). Evidently the Christian who recites the Psalms must be penetrated with the evangelical spirit and its elevated dispositions; in wishing the destruction of impiety, and in applying to the evil the vows of the Psalmist, he must wish moreover that the sinner may be converted and live: *Fill their faces with shame; and they shall seek thy uame O Lord. Let them be ashamed and troubled for ever and ever; and let them be confounded and perish. And let them know that the Lord is thy name; thou alone art the most High over all the earth* (Ps. lxxxii. 17-19).

The second objection they bring against the doctrine of the Psalms, is that it reduces the hopes of man to the present life and offers nothing beyond the goods of this world. "The faint glimmers of the hope of immortality" says Stanley, "are hardly duller in the silence of the Pentateuch or in the gloomy despair of Ecclesiastes, than in the Psalms 30, 49 and 88 (according to the Hebrew)" (*The Jewish Church*, Vol. II. p. 128).

It is true that the authors of the Psalms do not speak of the future life as the writers of the New Testament, but this must not surprise us. The gates of heaven had not been opened to man before the Ascension of our Saviour. Jesus Christ had reserved it to Himself to bring us full light on this great truth of the future life, the nature of which we could learn only through revelation. In expiating our sins, He rendered us worthy to enjoy eternal rewards, and He raised the veil which until now had partly hidden its mysteries. He showed us the terrible chastisement that awaits the impenitent sinner and the unspeakable joys which the prudent and faithful servant will taste in the kingdom of His Father. Thus He fulfilled the revelation of the Old Testament. He no longer only proposed to us for our example a Job or a Tobias rewarded with earthly goods for their piety and constancy, but He showed us also a Lazarus enjoying in the bosom of Abraham the happiness which he had merited upon earth by his patience.

We do not find and we cannot expect to find in the Psalms these flashes of light, because God had not yet caused them to shine in the eyes of men. The only thing we have a right to require from these sacred chants, is that they contain nothing contrary to the doctrine of truth that was to manifest itself some day. Now, not only do we not discover anything in the Psalms that is in opposition to the dogma of the immortality of the soul and the existence of another life, but we find therein clear and unquestionable allusions to this belief. They often speak of the *se'ol* which under the old law was the place of reunion of all men after their death (Ps. lxxxviii. 49; cf. Job xxx. 23). Like the other books of the Old Testament they represent it as "the land of forgetfulness and of silence," as a "pit" and as a "shady" place (Ps. xxx. 18; lxxxvii. 6, 7, 13; xciii. 17); however, its inhabitants, who are called *refa'im* (Ps. lxxxvii. 1) are not like the manes of Homer, for the other biblical books teach us that they have consciousness and that they know what passes

upon earth (I. Ki. xxviii. 15, etc.; Is. xiv. 9, etc.; Job xiv. 22). God is alive and He saves from death (cf. Ps. xxxii. 19; xlvii. 15; xlviii. 16; liii. 6; lxvii. 21; lxxii. 25-26, etc.), and even from the *se'ol* (Ps. xlviii. 19; cf. lxxxviii. 48; xxxviii. 5, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14). The comparisons which are drawn from the deliverance from *se'ol*, as well as the existence of this place, imply the faith in immortality (cf. Ps. xvii. 5-6; xxx. 4; lxx. 20, etc.).

The only thing that is wanting in the Psalms is the precise affirmation of the rewards and punishments in the other life, presented as the sanction of an observance of God's law. The Psalmist, like all the other sacred writers anterior to the Captivity, keeps silence on the future remuneration, or at least does not speak clearly thereof; he only insists, like Moses does in the Pentateuch, on the temporal rewards which alone appear suited to move a rude and unpolished people, and to influence efficaciously its conduct. In placing himself at this point of view, the sacred chanter regards death as so much the more dreadful in that it deprives us of the enjoyments of life, and he prays the Lord to prolong his days, because one does not praise Him in *se'ol*, or the sojourn of the dead whilst upon earth, if he obtain what he asks for, he will glorify Him and thank Him for His benefits (Ps. v. 6; xxix. 10; lxxxvii. 11; cxiv. 17-18).

It is alleged that such words are the negation of the immortality of the soul, but wrongly. On the contrary, they affirm the existence of *se'ol*, where the life continues beyond the tomb, and when they say that one does not praise God in the sojourn where souls dwelt before the coming of Christ, they express only a truth taught by the Church; that before the redemption through Christ, souls could not enjoy eternal happiness and thus glorify the Creator.

CHAPTER III

THE BOOKS OF SALOMON—THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.—The general charge made against the Book of Proverbs is that the doctrine which it contains is not only a human doctrine, but a doctrine that is vulgar and wanting in uplifting power. "The very wise Salomon," said the

Emperor Julian, "is he worthy to be compared with the Greek Phoclydes, with Theognides or Socrates? What! If you compare the exhortations of Isocrates with the Proverbs, you will find, I am sure, the son of Theodore superior to the wisest of kings" (cf. St. Cyril of Alexandria, in Migne's Patr., vol. lxxvi. col. 841). In the last century, Voltaire went still further than Julian the Apostate. He expressed himself on the Book of Proverbs as follows: "It is a collection of maxims which appear to our refined minds sometimes trivial, low, incoherent, without taste, without choice, and without design. . . . Is it to a great king, to the wisest of mortals, that they dare to impute such follies?" (*Dictionnaire philosophique*, art. *Salomon*.) Such language wrongs only the one who employs it. All men of good faith have, at all times, acknowledged the merits of the Book of Proverbs. Here is, for instance, what a Rationalist, Ed. Reuss, says on this subject:—

"Let us throw a rapid glance over the contents of the Book of Proverbs in order to characterize its spirit and moral value. Taken all in all, it is one of the most beautiful monuments of the literature of Judaism in the epoch of its restoration, and among all that this time has produced we could name only the Book of Canticles,—we mean the Psalms,—which is positively superior to it. Indeed, we meet therein here and there certain rules of prudence which do not precisely show a very generous sentiment, a noble and devoted heart, but which take the world as it is, and limit themselves to putting people, in need of counsel, on their guard against the vexations that may result from their inexperience. Besides, and still more often, the teaching stops to state the facts such as they took place in the ordinary course of things, especially those which are the consequence of the moral and intellectual defects of men, and leaves it to the reader to draw the lesson he pleases. But the great majority of these sentences are maxims immediately applicable and profitable for the conduct of life, sound, serious, and worthy of all praise. Everywhere the fear of God is recommended as the beginning and foundation of all wisdom. Wisdom itself is less the exercise of the intellectual faculties applied to the abstract or transcendent things, than the practical direction of the intellectual and social (let us add moral) life, which teaches us to avoid the rocks with which we are threatened, either by our own passions or by the bad example of our environment, and thus to arrive at true happiness. The firm and unshaken faith in the justice of the

government of the world, the certainty of the reward assured to virtue and the chastisement reserved for vice and crime, form also the foundation of national philosophy" (*Die Proverben*).

The Gospel has rendered us very difficult to be pleased. Thanks to the Old Testament, and especially to the New, the doctrine taught by the Book of Proverbs has become familiar to us and it has been perfected by Jesus Christ. But because it is now the common property of humanity, because the Saviour of mankind has taught us things of which Salomon had told us nothing, it does not follow at all that the maxims of the son of David are neither noble nor worthy of the Holy Ghost. In a collection of this kind, which touches on all the situations of life, there are necessarily counsels of all kinds, there must be advices for the most simple and for the most intelligent, for the weak and for the strong; the Wise Man addresses himself to all and speaks to all; hence he cannot always use the same language; he must not endeavor to make all men fly to the same height; to place himself within reach of everybody, the author lowers himself with the little ones and elevates himself with the great; he gives milk to the children and wine to strong constitutions. But his language is always that of prudence and truth. Julian the Apostate compares him with the gnomic writers of antiquity in order to place him below them. His judgment is most unjust. Nothing proves better the excellence of the Book of Proverbs than the comparison of its maxims with the pagan sages. Beginning with Phoclydes down to Marcus Aurelius, although the latter had breathed somewhat of the Christian atmosphere, all are much inferior to the son of David. Who is the one among them that elevated himself high enough to lay down, as the basis of moral life, the principle expressed in the first sentence of the Book of Proverbs: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. Human philosophy, indeed, recognized that virtue consists in the happy medium between two extremes, but no pagan philosopher, no human sage, had succeeded in avoiding all the excesses; in all the pagan moralists there are indefensible and reprehensible maxims, dogmatic and moral errors; in Salomon alone there is nothing to curtail nor to change. Theognides, the gnomic poet par excellence, who lived about 540 B. C., has left us, in the seven hundred distiches or thereabouts, that have escaped the ravages of time, a sort of moral code, but it is inspired by a defiant, bitter, and melancholy wisdom, which scarcely sees other than the evil

side of man. Epictetes, the greatest of the pagan moralists, was capable of finding only a morality that was negative and void of every principle of action, summed up in the famous maxim: "Suffer and abstain." The wisest among the pagans taught only a vague acknowledgment of the bounties of heaven or a resignation that was above human strength; they exhort us to consider the nature of suffering as an illusion in order to be enabled to bear it; never did the idea enter their mind to invite us, as Salomon does, to seek in the thought of God a sweet occupation for the heart, a sort of resting place, a refuge and a harbor. The doctrine of the author of the Proverbs is, therefore, far superior to that of the profane moralists. It is not yet the full light of the Gospel, but it is already its dawn. From that time God appears to us as a father, even in His chastisements:—

Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth.

And as a father in the son he pleaseth himself (Prov. iii. 12).

II. THE ANT IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.—Father Latreille, who has become famous on account of his labors about the ants, says, in speaking about these insects: "When a sage (Salomon in the Proverbs, vi. 6–8; xxx. 25) has sent us for several centuries to the school of the ants, let us go and hear their lessons. I do not wish to perpetuate the popular error on which the advice given by this sage is founded, and which has been so repeatedly reproduced. Let us not attribute to the ant a useless foresight; benumbed during winter, why should it form granaries for this season?" (*Histoire naturelle des fourmis.*)

Several other naturalists, before and after him, have also treated as a popular error what Salomon says of the ant. It is very true, however, that, whatever may be the case with the ants in our countries, those of the Orient warehouse grain and heap up provisions. Listen first to the testimony of W. Thomson, who has lived in Palestine during twenty-five years. He says: "Lately I read in a book which is not without pretension that the ants carry off neither wheat nor barley. What is said is in the form of commentary on the words of the Wise Man, that the ant *provideth her meat for herself in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest* (Prov. vi. 8). But the farmers have the same opinion as Salomon. . . . The ants are the greatest thieves in the country (in Palestine). Leave a bushel of barley near one of their underground cities and, in a very short time, the whole republic will be called out to the pillage. A

large black column stretches itself from the grain to their hole, and you are frightened at the result. Each grain seems to be provided with legs, and hastily marches along the movable column. The farmers unmercifully set fire to every ant-hill they find in the neighborhood of their threshing floors. Besides, Salomon does not say that the ants heap up provisions for the winter, but that they gather their food during the harvest (vi. 6-8). This is what they do with much industry, as can be seen by anyone that takes the pains to look." (*The Land and the Book*, p. 89.)

M. Lortet, dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Lyons, will complete the reply to the objections of Latreille, in the following passage, which tells us of the observations he made about the ants in Syria: "In the corn fields (around Jaffa) where the reapers are, we amuse ourselves in studying thoroughly the work of the gleanings ants, very common in Syria. This species, related to the *Atta barbara*, is of considerable size, and of an entirely black color. The thousands of female laborers found in one of these republics are actively occupied in seeking the grain fallen on the ground, and in carrying it into their vast subterranean granaries. The *mandibles* of this insect are not powerful enough to cut the outside cover of the grain, so these ants wait until the dampness of earth, by favoring the phenomena of germination, has softened the shell and transformed the inner amylaceous matter into glucose. Hence they know the action of chemical labor similar to that which takes place in the production of beer. What is more remarkable, is that these ants, by means of a particular care which they know how to give to the wheat, or perhaps through certain liquids which they inject into the grain, can advance or retard germination, and consequently prepare for themselves an agreeable food, just at the moment when they want it.

"The granaries of these ants, large and deep, form several stories connected by galleries one above the other. In these excavations, we often find a very considerable quantity of grain; also, if the harvest is not abundant, the peasants go and take again from these industrious insects the provisions they have made for the winter. There is already question of this custom in the ancient sacred writers of the Hebrews, whose legislators were careful to affirm the right of the poor and of the widow who come to glean in the fields. If some one opens the granaries of abundance of these ants in harvest time, the grain they contain belongs to the proprietor of the field; but, in the

warehouses uncovered after the departure of the reapers, the upper layers belong to the poor, whilst the deep layers alone, those which were gathered by the ants whilst the plant was not yet cut, belong to the master of the field" (*La Syrie d'aujourd'hui*, pp. 382-383).

CHAPTER IV

THE ECCLESIASTES

THE accusation made by infidels against the Book of Proverbs is that its doctrine is vulgar and trivial. They accuse that of Ecclesiastes with being impregnated with the most grievous philosophical errors; they reproach it with being epicurean, sceptic, materialistic, and pessimistic. In the first place, the author of Ecclesiastes is a blunt Epicurean who is disgusted with everything, and who can divert himself from the weariness of life only by gathering the fruit when it is ripe, the rose when it expands.

"The author takes for his topic," says Nöldecke, "the vanity of all human efforts, the uselessness of wisdom and of virtue, and the praise of the enjoyment of the moment, so fleeting, and nevertheless the sole good of man. He sees how men run after happiness, but he is convinced that all human efforts go for nothing, are a running after the wind. . . . He acknowledges . . . that man in his nothingness arrives at nothing, that the greatest wisdom, united with all the other advantages, preserves neither against death nor against want, and that a little foolishness is often worth more than all the intelligence of the world. How should man pursue his way through this life of miseries? The only answer which Ecclesiastes gives to this question is that he must enjoy the passing hour. Joy is for him the only real good which God has given. Men often desired to spiritualize this joy; they made thereof a pure enjoyment of the mind; but the preacher speaks in very clear terms, and repeatedly, of the enjoyment properly so-called, of sensual enjoyment, of the pleasure of eating and drinking, and of contemplating beautiful things." (*Litterarische Geschichte des A. T.*)

It is Nöldecke who expresses himself thus. He is right in saying that the author of Ecclesiastes preaches the vanity of all human

efforts, but he is mistaken when he asserts that with him "joy is the only real good." Salomon, proposing to establish that all is vanity, had to acknowledge the fact that, in the eyes of the most of men, enjoyment is no vanity, but a real good; he speaks like an Israelite to the Israelites of his time; he does not recommend to them mortification and penance, as the Gospel would do; he would not have been even understood if he had used this language; however, he is no Epicurean; he does not make any allusion to the pleasures and joys of this world. No one can refuse to admit this, not even Nöldecke, who is obliged to write: "He does not ignore that the enjoyment neither has anything lasting. Indeed, we perceive more or less clearly the sentiment that this enjoyment cannot entirely satisfy us in the long run."

Ecclesiastes never speaks of the goods of this world and of the pleasures of life, except to remind us that all this is a gift of God (Eccl. iii. 13; v. 17-19). Now it is no sin to enjoy God's gifts; and this doctrine is not that of the Epicureans. A rationalistic commentator, Knobel, has very well noted the distance that separates the Epicurean from the author of Ecclesiastes. "He distinguishes himself *essentially* from the Epicurean," he says, "in this that he does not recommend pleasure as an end, but only as the use of a good which God grants us in His bounty and for which we ought to be thankful to Him (ii. 26; iii. 13; v. 18). Moreover, we have to remark that in order to enjoy life, he does not mean that we should give ourselves up to a foolish drunkenness of the senses, to frivolous amusements, to disordinate passions, in one word, to forbidden pleasures; far from this, he formally condemns all these excesses (ii. 2; vii. 1-7; x. 16-19). For him to enjoy life is to use sweetly and quietly the goods of the earth; he does not forget to exhort us at the same time to have the fear of God, and to remind the one who enjoys himself thus of the judgment he will have to undergo some day" (xiii. 1-13.—Knobel, *Commentar über das Buch Coheleth*, pp. 23-24).

Nor is the author of Ecclesiastes a Sceptic. This, however, is, according to Nöldecke, his principal trait. "The dominant character of the author," he says, "is scepticism." According to Renan, the author of Ecclesiastes "did not stop at scepticism, but crossed it," and we can consider him as sceptic only in so far as scepticism is a disease which always leaves some traces behind. In reality, he is not a sceptic; he unhesitatingly believes in all the great and fundamental truths,

in the existence of God, in the obligation to live conformably to the moral law. "Ecclesiastes withdraws himself from scepticism," says Knobel, "and elevates himself even to faith, when he hopes for a just reward of the actions of men and when he acknowledges that God has disposed of all things well" (*Opus cit.*, p. 23). He does not even propose the problem of certitude, all he asks is whether man can enjoy a perfect happiness here below and find in the enjoyment of study what he does not find elsewhere (viii. 16-17), and he answers that our mind is incapable, not of discovering and knowing the truth, but, which is quite different, of fathoming the why and wherefore of things. Now, who can deny to-day any more than then the limits of human intelligence or hesitate to acknowledge that nature is for us full of enigmas and mysteries?

But if the author of Ecclesiastes is not a sceptic, is he not at least a Materialist? Renan, who took up again all the accusations of Voltaire against the author of the Ecclesiastes, insists chiefly on the point that Ecclesiastes did not believe in a future life. He says: "It is clear that the impenetrable obscurities with which the government of the world is surrounded in the eyes of our author would be dispelled if Coheleth (Ecclesiastes) had the least notion of a life to come. In this respect his ideas are those of all the enlightened Jews. The pale and gloomy existence of the *refaim*, which preoccupied the credulous people, especially the superstitious Chanaanites, has no moral meaning. We do not feel in the *Scheol*. The death of man and that of the animal are one and the same thing. Life with man and with the animal comes from the breath of God, who raises and penetrates matter in mysterious ways. 'There is only one breath in all things.' At death the divine breath separates itself from matter; the body returns to the earth, from which it was taken, and the spirit ascends to God, from whom it had emanated. During some time there remains a remembrance which continues the existence of man among his kind; soon this remembrance disappears, and then all is finished." (*L' Ecclesiaste*, p. 22-23.)

Such is, according to Renan and Rationalists in general, the summary of the ideas of the author of Ecclesiastes on human life. We will first remark that it is not at all clear, whatever they may say, "that the impenetrable obscurities by which the government of the world is surrounded in the eyes of our author, would be dispelled if Coheleth had the least notion of a life to come." St. Augustine,

St. Thomas, and all the Christian doctors, had the notion of a life to come, and nevertheless they sought to explain "the obscurities" of the divine government and the existence of evil in the world. However, they were not Materialists on this account; nor was the author of Ecclesiastes. "In two or three places where we might believe him sinking into pure materialism"—Renan says this—"he suddenly elevates himself by a higher accent. . . . Coheleth does not forget God's judgment."

To establish that Salomon did not believe in another life, they quote the following text: *Therefore the death of man, and of beasts is one, and the condition of them both is equal: as man dieth, so they also die: all things breathe alike, and man has nothing more than beast: all things are subject to vanity. And all things go to one place: of earth they were made, and into earth they return together. Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beasts descend downward?* (Eccl. iii. 19-21).

It is especially upon the interpretation of the last verse that the materialistic claim is founded. It can be explained in the sense that there are few who know exactly what becomes of the soul after death. The Hebrew Bible, in the edition of the Massorets, gives the last verse as follows: *Who knoweth the spirit of man which ascends upward and the spirit of the beast which descends downward?* The massoretic meaning, which is not difficult of interpretation, is much preferable. The sacred author means to say, therefore: How few men are there that pay attention to what becomes of the soul! This can be made to agree very well with the words: *God shall judge both the just and the wicked* (iii. 17). If they pretend that this passage is obscure, they cannot refuse at least to acknowledge that belief in the immortality is clearly professed at the end of the book: *The dust return into its earth, from whence it was, and the spirit (of man) return to God, who gave it* (xii. 7). Therefore, the author of Ecclesiastes believed in another life and they cannot support themselves upon a verse the meaning of which may be subject to dispute in order to reject a doctrine clearly affirmed in another verse.

There remains for us to say a few words on another accusation made against the sacred writer. Since they invented Pessimism, they have found this new error in Ecclesiastes. The Pessimists claim the author of Ecclesiastes as one of their own. A. Taubert calls his book *The Catechism of Pessimism* and recommends its reading to all the

followers of the hopeless doctrines of Edward Hartmann and Schopenhauer. "Coheloth," says Renan, "is a book . . . profoundly modern. The Pessimism of our days finds therein its neatest expression. The author appears to us like a resigned Schopenhauer, although superior to the one whom an evil stroke of fate forces to live on a German dinner."

Certainly, it is very true that Ecclesiastes describes the disenchantments of life with a melancholic eloquence which produces the deepest impression. But the Pessimism of this book is quite different from that of our contemporary philosophers. The latter are materialists and atheists, and the former firmly believes in vice and virtue; in a future life beyond the grave; in a personal God (iii. 14-18), who in His time will judge the good and the bad; these are so many beliefs irreconcilable with Pessimism which is one of the diseases of our century.

CHAPTER V

THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

ACCORDING to Rationalists, the Canticle of Salomon has been erroneously placed among the collection of Scriptures. Here is what Reuss says: "The little book known under the name of Canticle of Canticles is found in the Bible only in consequence of a strange misunderstanding, and it has maintained itself therein only through the despotism of tradition, which preferred to accommodate itself to the most monstrous extravagances of exegesis than to admit an error obstinately denied and nevertheless so easy to discover. . . . It is totally different from all the rest of Holy Scripture, and conceived in a spirit, we will not say anti-religious, but positively foreign to the sentiments that dominate everywhere else in this collection. It is certain that the Bible contains more than one writing which, rated from the literary point of view, is much inferior to the Canticle, but there is not one that is not destined to awaken or to strengthen the religious sentiment, and proper to foster it. . . . This element is here absolutely wanting. We have now to do with a profane poetry. In making use of this term,

we do not wish to express a blame, but only to state the fact that we cannot recognize in these few pages any of the characteristics that would assure to them, no matter what the title may be, the place they occupy in the sacred volume and that during eighteen centuries, and with about two or three exceptions, nobody thought about contesting them" (*Das Hohe Lied*).

If it were so evident as Reuss pretends that the Canticle is a purely profane poem, and not susceptible of any other interpretation than that which he gives to it, it would be really astonishing that nobody "during eighteen centuries, with about two or three exceptions," perceived this. Indeed, neither the Jews nor the Christians understood the work of Salomon as rationalistic criticism understands it. The fact cannot be denied. If they had not attached to it a religious meaning, never would it have been admitted as a book of the Scriptures. Reuss does not deny this. "We can be assured," he says, "that they would not have joined this book with the others held to be inspired, if they would not have given it a meaning which justified this place."

Besides, history establishes in the most certain manner that the Canticle has always been regarded by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, as one of the books "destined to awaken or to strengthen the religious sentiment and nourish it." The history of the entire Christian exegesis attests that the interpreters and commentators, commencing with Origen, the most ancient known to us, knew how to draw from it the most instructive and most edifying lessons. Who does not know of the beautiful usage which St. Bernard, St. Francis of Sales, Brother Louis de Leon, and so many others made thereof?

Both the Old and New Testament have often compared the relations of God with His people with those of a bridegroom with his bride. The new law, being above all the law of love, had to delight, still more than the old law, in this graceful and engaging image, which sees in our Lord Jesus Christ spilling His blood for us, the well-beloved of the faithful soul. Also, on the lips of those generous virgins which the heroism of their martyrdom, undergone more on account of their chastity than of their faith, makes shine with such a pure aureola of glory, we find again the language of the bride of the Canticle. Cecilia and Agnes express themselves at Rome as they expressed themselves at Jerusalem, and the Church, in her offices, is not afraid to recall to mind their language, capable perhaps to scan-

dalize certain souls, but also proper to edify those who are simple and upright. Certainly, as Origen wrote, the Canticle of Canticles must not be put into the hands of everybody; however, there are souls that are capable of understanding it and to make use of it to raise themselves towards God. Those that are clean of heart shall see God, says our Saviour in the Gospel (Matt. v. 8). "When I read this famous Canticle of Canticles, which Voltaire called with so much taste 'a song of the bodyguard,' I was astonished," says Lacordaire, "to remain so cold before such a great and such an Oriental nakedness of expression; I asked myself why, not understanding yet that, if there is an art to hide vice under learned and calculated forms of style, there is also an art to hide virtue under colors which would seem those of passion. It is with the Canticle of Canticles as with the Crucifix; both are naked with impunity because they are divine."

The customs of the Orient explain to us the character of its literature. There men and women live completely separated, hence it comes that the language is less reserved and that poetry is not like that of the Occident; we do not meet therein images and descriptions like in ours. Moreover, Hebrew civilization was not so refined as ours. What de Brosses said of certain laws of the Pentateuch, we can apply to the Canticle of Canticles: "When a people is savage, it is simple, and its expressions are this also. As nobody is shocked by them, there is no need of circumscribing them, a sure sign that the imagination has corrupted the language. The Hebrew people was half savage (that is, little advanced in civilization); their law-book treats quite openly of natural things which our languages are careful to hide. It is a sign that among them this manner of speaking had nothing licentious, for they would not have written a book of laws in a manner contrary to the customs."

From this simplicity of morals and language goes forth an allegorical and religious poetry such as is the Canticle of Canticles, according to the ancient and general interpretation, and which has nothing strange nor shocking for the Orientals.

Rationalists, however, in order to attribute to the Canticle an exclusively profane character, deny the existence of mystic poetry among the Hebrews. Listen to what Renan says: "To what improbabilities do we not expose ourselves in placing a great development of transcendent theology in Judea in the tenth century B. C. Never was there anything more remote from mysticism than the ancient

Hebrew spirit. The idea of bringing into relation the Creator with the creature, the supposition that they can be enamored with one another, and the thousand refinements of this kind in which both the Hindoo and Christian mysticism had ample scope, belong to the antipodes of the severe conception of the Semitic God. It cannot be questioned that such ideas would have been looked upon in Israel as blasphemies. . . . No people has been more sparing than the Hebrew people of symbolism, allegories, and speculations on the Deity. Drawing a line of absolute demarkation between God and man, they rendered all familiarity, all tender sentiment, and all reciprocity between heaven and earth impossible. Christianity has made innovations in this sense only by doing violence to its Jewish origin, and by provoking the anger of the true Israelites that remained faithful to the severe notion of the Deity." (*Le Cantique des Cantiques*, pp. 119-121.)

The foregoing passage must cause a great surprise to everyone who is somewhat familiar with Holy Scripture. What! "all tender sentiment, all reciprocity" were "impossible" between God and His people? And where do we find more tender sentiments than in the Psalms? Where can we see more than in these sacred chants the affection of God for man and of man for God? "The idea to bring into relation the Creator with the creature belongs to the antipodes of the severe conception of the Semitic God," they say, and there is hardly any sacred book of the Hebrews where this relation is not established! No image is more common in the sacred authors. *Thy Creator is thy bride* (*dominabitur*, as the Vulgate has translated, signifies bride), says Isaias, *Jehovah Sabaoth is his name* (Is. liv. 5). *As the bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride, so thy God shall rejoice over thee*, says the same prophet (lxii. 5). *Go* (says God to Jeremias), *and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying: Thus saith the Lord: I have remembered thee, pitying thy youth, and the love of thy espousals, when thou followdest me in the desert* (of Sinai, Jer. ii. 2). We could multiply these examples to infinity, but the texts quoted are quite significant, and it is useless to insist thereon any further to show how false the assertions of rationalism are.

Neither the genius of the Orient nor the literary, intellectual, or moral habits of the Israelites are, therefore, opposed to the Canticle of Canticles being an allegorical poem; on the contrary, everything reveals in them a strong inclination for the allegory in general, and

particularly the allegory which tradition has always seen in the chant of Salomon. Rationalists, however, deny that we can remark any trace therein. "Not only no mystic mental reservation can be discovered therein," says Renan, "but the context and the plan of the poem absolutely exclude the idea of an allegory." The affirmation is sharp; but it is not proved at all. Even if the allegorical sense would not impose itself, and shine through in the drama which Renan and divers commentators discover in the Canticle, this sense would not be less possible and even probable.

However, it is false; that the allegory does not show itself under this diaphnic gauze which covers it without hiding it. All is vague, floating, uncertain, especially when there is question of the bride. Sometimes it is a shepherdess, sometimes a vine-dresser, sometimes the daughter of a prince (Cant. viii. 1); in one passage, she is locked up in a harem, in another, on the contrary, she is wandering during night in the midst of Jerusalem and here she meets other young girls, which is indeed little in accord with Oriental customs; elsewhere we see her descending the Libanon, from the top of the Amana, from the summit of the Sanir, and Hermon and from other places (iv. 8); here she is held to be married, there she is still a child under the care of brothers; we do not know whether the name of Sulamite is her proper name or the indication of her native place; the critics have seen in this book, the one a collection of chants, others, a drama; the latter have undertaken to distinguish the scenes therein and they arrived at quite different results; as many commentators, as many plans; in one word it is all over the vague and the incertitude of an allegory, of an action which passes in an ill-determined locality and whose personages, time and place are enveloped in a sort of cloud, like in the parable of the prodigal son and of the ten virgins of the Gospel. The Church, therefore, is not wrong in beholding an allegory in the Canticle of Canticles, that is, the symbol of the union of God with the faithful soul.

The Synagogue understood it of the union with Jehovah; Christians explain it as being the union of Jesus Christ with the devout soul. Rationalists reject this second explanation still more than the first, because they cannot admit that the sacred author had the gift of prophecy and thought of our Saviour Jesus Christ. We do not need to establish here that it has rather this meaning than

another. The Church believes in the inspiration of the Sacred Books; we believe the same as she does, accept her authority and her interpretation; infidel critics believe in nothing supernatural, but it is not the place to prove in this work that they are wrong; it is sufficient for us to have shown that the Canticle is an allegorical poem, as so many other popular poems in the Orient.

CHAPTER VI

THE BOOK OF WISDOM

THE Book of Wisdom was written in Greek. It had for its end to establish that divine wisdom is the source of all good. Composed outside the Holy Land and among pagans, it combats almost on every page idolatry and false philosophy. As it does not always proceed in a methodical manner, resembling in this all oriental writings, various authors have believed that it is only a compilation, but this opinion is not well founded: "It is wrong," says Reuss, "to question the unity of this work. . . . There are critics . . . who have pretended that this work is from several writers, and that a more recent author arbitrarily must have added lucubrations which originally had nothing common. For this end they support themselves on the fact that after the ninth chapter there is no longer question of Salomon, and that wisdom, which in the first half of the book is laid down as a divine power, and even as a personality, is named no longer in the second half. Thus they came to persuade themselves that we must seek the soldering marking the beginning and end of each particular element. But the diversity of the results they have obtained by this proceeding may cause doubt already on the correctness of the principle that directed criticism, and . . . we believe that this book can be understood without attempting to reduce it to a work without value." (*Philosophie und Religion der Hebræer*.)

Wisdom speaks in a clear and precise manner of the immortality of the soul and of the other life. "In consideration of these ideas," says Reuss again, ". . . several modern writers have ventured the hypothesis that this book . . . might be a much more recent

production and be the work of a Christian pen. We cannot share this manner of seeing. It is true that here and there we meet with phrases or images which we also read in the New Testament (Wis. iii. 5, etc.; iv. 2, 10; v. 17, etc.; vii. 26; ix. 8, 15, etc.). Again it is true that in some places, God is called father and that love is pointed out as the mover of His actions (xi. 10, 24, etc.). But for want of more direct and more positive indications, these exterior and gratuitous analogies are not sufficient to establish the thesis in question, so much more as none of the fundamental ideas of the Gospel are even touched from afar." (*Opus cit.*)

The author is, therefore, anterior to Christianity, and he composed his work in Egypt, probably at Alexandria. There, say the rationalists, he inspired himself with the Greek philosophy and borrowed several errors from it: the emanation, the belief in the eternity of the world, in the preëxistence of souls, in the corruption of the body considered as the seat of sin.

The attributes which the sacred author gives to divine Wisdom do not make an emanatist of him. "The most of the images," says Reuss, "by means of which he sought to characterize wisdom, bring us back to the idea of an emanation of the divine substance itself."—Wisdom is called the breath of God's power, an outflow of the glory of the Almighty (Wis. vii. 25), because divine wisdom manifests itself in the creation and in the government of the world, a work of almighty power. The author of Ecclesiasticus expresses the same thought when he says: God poured out his wisdom upon all his works (Ecclus. i. 10; cf. Heb. i. 3).

Wisdom is represented not as the soul of the world, because it is written that *the spirit of the Lord hath filled the whole world*, that His wisdom *penetrates and insinuates itself into all things*, that *therefore, it reacheth from one end of the world to the other* (Wis. i. 7; vii. 24; viii. 1). This language simply signifies that the divine power is without limits. To express his thought, the Israelitic writer is obliged to make use of metaphors; it would be greatly unjust towards him were we to abuse his style of writing in order to alter the nature of his thought. The Fathers of the Church have understood with St. Paul (Heb. i. 3) the passage quoted above as referring to the Word (Wis. vii. 25), Who is consubstantial with the Father, distinct and separate from the created world.

The author of Wisdom, therefore did not borrow from the Stoics the belief in the soul of the world; neither did he borrow from Plato the error of the eternity of matter. *Thy almighty hand*, he says in addressing himself to God, *which made the world of matter without form* (xi. 18). Not only the Catholic doctors, but also the ancient Protestant commentators were unanimous in seeing in these words the formation and the organization of the world, not the creation of first matter. The "matter without form" is only the Greek translation of the *tohu bohu* of Genesis (i. 2), which expresses what the elements of the universe were, before God put them in order and He had made to cease the state of the primitive confusion. The author of Wisdom teaches besides, like Moses, the creation *ex nihilo*, when he says: *God created all things and has given them being* (Wis. i. 14). For him, the world is, therefore, not eternal by its nature, because it is God that gave existence to all the creatures.

It is not less false that Wisdom has drawn from the Greek philosophers the belief in the preëxistence of souls. It does not teach this. Reuss translates the passage, where rationalistic criticism pretends to discover this error thus; "I was a well-born child, I also received a good soul; or rather, being good, I was entered into a defiled body" (Wis. viii. 19-20). Behold now the commentary of the Professor of Strasburg: "A very interesting passage from the point of view of the history of philosophy. Evidently the author teaches therein the preëxistence of souls. Speaking first as a simple layman, he affirms that by his very birth he had an equally good body and soul,—he adds that this is not sufficient if wisdom is not joined with them (cf. Wis. vii. 1); but right away he corrects himself and speaking the language of philosophy, he insists that the persisting goodness of the soul, which constitutes its true person, has determined her entrance into a pure body, which means to say, whose natural dispositions did not incline instinctively towards vice. There are, therefore, according to him, before birth, souls differently disposed, whose earthly lot is, to a certain point, regulated before hand. We can understand how this theory must have shocked orthodoxy, and that in both camps, Catholic and Protestant, they tried all kinds of exegetical explanations to make the text disappear." (*Opus cit.*)

It is sufficient to explain the meaning of the Book of Wisdom, without "all kinds of exegetical explanations," to show that the Platonic philosophy has nothing to do with it. "I was endowed by nature with good qualities of both body and soul" says the Hebrew text: or rather because my soul was good and pure, an undefiled body was given to it;" which means: men are not born by chance, but come into the world conformably to the will of God and with the gifts He bestows upon them. Providence establishes a sort of harmony between the body and the soul. The Neo-Platonics considered both matter and the body as being evil. The sacred author, on the contrary, speaks to us of a "pure body and worthy of a pure soul" and he considers the soul before the body, not on account of a priority of existence and time, but on account of a priority of nature and dignity.

The last error with which Rationalists reproach the author of Wisdom is found, according to them, in the verse: *The corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth upon many things* (Wis. ix. 15). On which Reuss writes: "The idea that the body is a hindrance, even a prison for the mind, reminds also of the philosophy of Plato and of the Stoics." It matters little to inquire here whether that which the sacred writer says reminds or not of the Greek philosophy. What he expresses is the truth, a universal truth, known by the children of Israel as well as by the Hellenists; he speaks like St. Paul, who writes to the Romans: *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. vii. 24.) When Louis XIV. heard the verses of Racine, translating the thought of St. Paul: *My God what a cruel war: I find two men in me*, he cried out: "These two men I know very well." The cause of this wrestling is especially the antagonism between the soul and the body, fruit of original sin. Who is the one that cannot say of himself that the flesh wrestles against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh?

CHAPTER VII

ECCLESIASTICUS

ECCLESIASTICUS was written in Hebrew and in verses by Jesus, son of Sirach, of Jerusalem. The original is lost. There remains thereof a Greek translation, made by his grandson, from which all the other versions are derived. This book has always been considered in the East and West, as an excellent handbook of morals, containing the wisest counsels, and at the bearing of everyone on account of the simplicity of its form and practical character of its precepts. Protestant criticism has attempted to make light thereof, following Calvin, who showed a great contempt towards this book. Several Rationalists of our days are more just.

"This work," says Reuss, "certainly has not merited the disdain with which Catholic prejudice treats it since three centuries. For we find therein very wise counsels, sound and useful directions for all ages and conditions. Erected upon an essentially religious basis, referring all to God, the sovereign dispenser of all good and the judge at once severe and merciful of the acts of men, this moral enjoins as first precept the fear of the Most High. Judaism is sketched therein in what it had the most noble and most recommendable since the voice of the prophets was heard no more. The one who speaks here to us, is the real Israelite in whom there is no deceit." (*Opus cit.*)

Infidel criticism could formulate against Ecclesiasticus only trifling objections. It accuses him of favoring necromancy, because he makes allusion to the apparition of Samuel, called forth by the pythoness of Endor at the request of Saul (Ecclus. xvii. 25; cf. I. Ki. xxviii. 8, etc.). But the calling to mind of this historical detail is no approbation of the practices of necromancy. It also accuses him of having borrowed from the Alexandrian philosophy the belief that each people was under the direction and conduct of an angel: *Over every nation he set a ruler, and Israel was made the manifest portion of God* (Eccle. xvii. 14, 15). "In speaking of rulers given to various nations, a Jewish theologian dreamt of angels" (Dan. x. 13, etc.), says Reuss. He could not dream very well of kings, and it is even the natural meaning of this

passage which reminds us that God is the king of His chosen people (I. Ki. viii. 7; Jud. viii. 23). But had it been the intention of the sacred author to designate the angels, he would not have needed for this to have recourse to the philosophers of Alexandria, of whom they certainly knew very little at Jerusalem; Daniel, in his prophecies, showed to him angels set over the conduct of nations (Dan. x. 13, 21; xii. 1).

THE PROPHETS

CHAPTER I

AUTHENTICITY OF THE SECOND PART OF THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH

THE greatest of the prophets is Isaiah. In the collection of his prophecies, divided into two parts, the most beautiful and most important is the second, which comprises the twenty-seven last chapters. All rationalistic critics deny their authenticity. J. B. Koppe, in 1779, in his introduction to the commentary of Lowth on Isaiah, expressed some doubts on chapter i., but it was Doederlein who, in 1789, really opened the way; he supposed that chapters xl-lxvi of this prophet dated from the Babylonian Captivity. A great number of Protestant theologians have followed him.

From the time they rejected supernatural prophecy, together with the miracle, as an impossible thing, they had to condemn also writings wherein one could not disown a revelation properly speaking, because they contain evident predictions, if they are really the work of Isaiah. Hence, in reality in order to deny the supernatural and prophecy, they deny the authenticity of the second part of Isaiah. Several Rationalists expressly maintain that Isaiah could not have written the prophecies in regard to the Babylonian Captivity because he lived during the Assyrian period, when the kings of Nineveh exercised supremacy in Asia Minor and that Babylon formed a part of their empire. Nägelsbach has correctly remarked that, according to this rule, the composition of chapters lii-lv of Isaiah should be referred until after the Christian era and that it might be maintained that the one who wrote them, had read the Epistles of St. Paul. The negation of the prophetic revelation entails the

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negation of the authenticity of all the prophets of the Old Testament: Osee could not foretell the ruin of the kingdom of Israel and the return from the Captivity; Micheas, the ruin of Samaria and of Jerusalem, *the Babylonian Captivity*, and the birth of the Messias at Bethlehem; Nahum, the destruction of Ninive; and Habacuk, that of the Chaldeans. Nobody, however, dares to deny the authenticity of these prophecies.

Also Rationalists feel that the rejection *a priori* of prophecy is logically weak, so they endeavor to find positive proofs in favor of their conclusions.

The first argument they bring forth in order to establish that Isaiah is not the author of the prophecies concerning the Captivity, is the historical situation which they suppose. Listen what Kuenen says in regard to this subject: "What is the historical situation which the author of our chapters has always before his mind, to which he attaches all his exhortations and who makes it, so to speak, the starting point of all his hopes in regard to the future of Israel? Until a certain point, all the exegetists give the same answer. We can easily recognize that the author generally addresses himself to the Israelites exiled at Babylon. In the time he writes, Israel, by its subjection to the Babylonians or Chaldeans, underwent the just punishment for its sins; Jerusalem, the other cities of Judea, the temple, all is in ruin; the rigors of the exile last already for some time past; near is the deliverance; Koresch (Cyrus) has already carried great victories: soon he will take hold of Babylon and will restore liberty to the Jews; the latter, returned into their country, will rebuild the city as well as the temple, and will enjoy a prosperity unknown until then. Such is the state of things supposed all over. Besides what we have pointed out, it is good to note that the author, without ever mentioning the Israelitish kings, the temple or sacrifices of the temple (false affirmation, See Is. lvi. 7), occupies himself, on the contrary, with religious duties, such as the observation of the Sabbath or fasts, which could very well be practiced outside of Palestine. This would be sufficient to make us date chapters xl-lxvi from the second half of the Babylonian Captivity. But there is more. The author knows exactly the exterior situation and the dispositions of the mind of the exiles; he knows the diverse tendencies that separate them, their alternatives of joy and despondency. In return, in these twenty-seven

chapters, not one single text can be given that points out the idea that they have Isaias, the son of Amotz, or any other prophet anterior to the exile, for author. How decisive!" (*Kritische Geschichte der Bücher des A. T.*)

All these assertions must be examined. It is certain, first, that Isaias lived in spirit in the midst of the captives, and thereby he is a prophet, God revealing to him the future. All the exegetists, Rationalists as well as others, acknowledge that what characterizes the style of the prophets, is to cross the limits of time and to see the future as if it were present. "They present their views on the future," says Kuenen; "they contemplate it as we see the present. . . . Certainly, the prophets have sometimes depicted the future as present. . . . The imagination of the prophet could, sometimes, transport him into the future, and thus cause him to take a point of fictive view. His words will then apply themselves before all to a time that is not his own." If negative critics make these concessions, it is because the evidence forces them to do so. But, because Isaias speaks in many places as if he had lived in the midst of the Captivity, it does not follow at all that he did not prophesy before Nabuchodonosor.

It is true, besides, that the time in which the writer lived must always manifest itself by some trait, for he writes for his contemporaries as well as for posterity. Also we shall prove against Rationalists: (1) That the author of the second part of Isaias lived before the Captivity; (2) That he lived in Palestine.

First, he lived before the Babylonian Captivity. As it is "the servant of Jehovah" and not the prophet that speaks almost constantly in this part of Isaias, it is easier for him to withdraw himself in some way from his time and surroundings; however chronological indications are not wanting. And first, the author speaks as prophet, like a man who writes a long time before the events which he announces (Is. xli. 21-29; xliii. 9; xlv. 21; xli. 9; xlviii. 5, 16). *Who*, he says among other things, *hath declared this from the beginning, who hath foretold this from that time? Have not I the Lord? . . . It is I that hath announced the future . . . I foretold thee of old, before they came to pass I told thee. . . . Assemble yourselves together, all you, and hear: who among them hath declared these things? . . . Come ye near unto me, and hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the be-*

ginning: from the time before it was done, I was there (Is. xlv. 21; xlii. 12; xlviii. 5, 14, 16).

The great event which God had thus prophesied, is the deliverance of Israel by Cyrus. Now, if these words had been written only when the king of Persia had actually restored liberty to the captives, how could the prophet have expressed himself thus, by addressing the captives themselves? These words suppose that the prophecies are known beforehand, and consequently that they were written before the events. They also embarrass Rationalists a good deal and prevent them from being agreed among themselves as to the date of the second part of Isaias. Bertholdt refers these oracles to four different epochs: before the siege of Babylon by the Persians, during the siege, at the end of the siege and after the taking of the city. According to Gesenius, several chapters were written at the moment when the approach of Cyrus gave hope to the Jews for their deliverance; those which announce the victory of this prince as certain are of a posterior time. Knobel dates chapters xl-xlviii from the first success of Cyrus; chapters xlix-lxii from the time of the wars undertaken against the peoples of the West; the first six verses of chapter lxii. describe the ruin of the kingdom of Lydia, etc. Other infidel critics like Beck and Seinecke, place all these prophecies after the edict of enfranchisement of Cyrus which, they say, gave rise to them; but when they agree as to the time, they are not in accord as to the interpretation: according to Beck, the sacred author describes under form of prophecy an already accomplished fact, in order to persuade his contemporaries that it was the hand of Providence that executed these wonders; according to Seinecke on the contrary, the deliverance is not announced as a future event; all over it is supposed as already realized; what is foretold, is a new deliverance following that which took place in Chaldea. The embarrassment of negative criticism can be judged by these few examples.

The prophecy concerning Cyrus is, however, so clear that the rationalistic Kuenen makes the following avowal: "Everybody knows of the victories of Cyrus (Is. xli. 25). Well, 'before and since the beginning,'—even 'since a long time and openly,'—He (God) had foretold them through the prophets. They do not tell us who these prophets were. . . . The author might have thought . . . of himself and his friends who, since the revolt of Cyrus, had fore-

seen a better future. Beginning with the year 558 B. C., Cyrus did not cease to wage war. . . . From all these wars he went forth victorious, although he often paid dearly for his victories. Since the beginning of his career, the Jews might have saluted him as the future conqueror of Babylon, and as their future liberator; in this case the author of Isaias (xl-lxvi) had the right to appeal to the provisory realization of the suggested predictions, about twenty years before, at the first appearance of Cyrus. If these predictions contain for him a supernatural character, the respect due to his conviction certainly forces us to be of his opinion." (*Opus cit.*)

Hence we cannot deny that the author speaks of Cyrus as prophet. According to Kuenen, he takes simple natural provisions for supernatural revelations; criticism admits, therefore, that Isaias believed himself a prophet; this is all that is important for us to establish at present: the facts had been announced before they were fulfilled. How long before? "About twenty years," answers the professor of Leyden.

We will show, in pursuing our inquiries, that these prophecies were made a good deal earlier. We have come to the conclusion that the second part of Isaias is anterior to the events which it announces, because these events had been foretold before their fulfillment, but still we ignore what space of time the prediction had preceded the execution. Can we now make one step further and fix, not a precise year, because the intrinsic examination of a writing of this kind does not permit this, but an approximate time? Yes, we can, and we are in a state to establish that the author wrote before the Captivity. He reproaches, indeed, God's people with their idolatry, as a crime which they actually committed. These reproaches are renewed in a multitude of passages; he returns to them continually, with a persistence and vehemence which attest that idolatry was the curse of his time.

Now, the acts of idolatry with which the prophet reproaches God's people, could have taken place only before the Captivity. Rationalists maintain, as they are forced to do by their thesis, that the crimes of which the Jews are accused were committed in Chaldea, where they adored the local gods, but their explanation is certainly false, because Juda is accused of violating the law by dwelling in tombs (lxiii. 4) and by offering sacrifices to idols

on high mountains (lvii. 7), all of which could not have occurred in Chaldea, where there are no mountains, nor tombs hewed out of the rock and in which they could dwell. This idolatrous worship was, therefore, rendered to Chanaanite deities, before the Captivity (lvi. 9; lvii. 11-13); consequently these prophecies were written before the Captivity, as those of the first part of Isaias where the language is the same. If idolatry had persevered at Babylon as in Judea, God could not have considered the Captivity as an expiation and reopen to the exiles the gates of their country. We may also remark that if the prophet had not written before the Captivity, we could not explain why when he recalls to mind (lii. 4) the Assyrian oppression, he says nothing of the Chaldeans.

Moreover, M. Himpel has correctly remarked that the author of the second part of Isaias makes no allusion to the last years of the kingdom of Juda. This silence would be inexplicable, if these prophecies dated from the time of the Captivity, for the chastisements inflicted upon Juda, on account of its idolatry and infidelities, by the arms of Nabuchodonosor, would have furnished to his eloquence ample material. But God did not reveal these details to His prophet. He knows only of the impious worship rendered to the false deities in the time of Manasses, King of Juda. This is his horizon. The peoples which he knows best, are not the neighbors of Babylon, but those with whom an inhabitant of Jerusalem is most familiar in the time of Ezechias and of Manasses: The Egyptians, Ethiopians, Idumeans, and Madianites.

Also unprejudiced Rationalists, not blinded by party system, admit that the historical allusions refer the composition of the second part of Isaias to a more ancient time than that of the deportation of the Jews into Chaldea. "Historical allusions of this kind," says T. K. Cheyne, "are really found therein, as was clearly seen by the ancient defenders of tradition. They are very numerous and striking in chapters lvi.; lvii.; lxv; lxvi, where it is even probable that we did not seize their whole bearing, on account of the contrary prejudice which the reading of the preceding chapters produced. But let us read them separately and I believe we can hardly question that the descriptions which they contain have reference to an other period or periods than the Captivity" (*The Prophecies of Isaiah*, Vol. II., p. 225).

The intrinsic examination of the second part of Isaias brings us, therefore, in regard to its date, to the conclusions of tradition. The same holds good in regard to the place where it must have been composed, This "mark" of composition, to express ourselves thus, is so obvious that an English Rationalist, Mr. Cheyne, could not help acknowledging it: "Some passages of the second Isaias," he says "are favorable to the theory of a Palestinian origin. Thus, chapter lvii. 5, the allusion to the beds of the streams is quite inapplicable in the alluvial plains of Babylon; it is the same with the subterranean caves mentioned in chapter xlii. 22. So also and although, undoubtedly, Babylonia was more wooded in ancient times than it is to-day, it is nevertheless certain that the trees enumerated in chapter xli. 19 (the cedar, the cypress, etc.), were mostly not indigenous to this country, whilst the palm-tree, the most common of the Babylonian trees, is not mentioned at all. (*Opus cit.*)

Not only does the prophet express himself as a man living in the country of Juda, but he speaks as an inhabitant of Jerusalem, such as Isaias was. He addresses himself to Sion and to Jerusalem; he says that God places guards on the walls of this city (Is. lxii. 1, 6; xlii. 9); he speaks of it as living in it, and, consequently, supposes that the capital of Judea is not ruined and destroyed (Is. xl. 2, 9. See also lvi. 5, 7).

While certain passages show that the author lived in Palestine, others prove that he did not write in Chaldea. Recalling to mind, in one place (xli. 8-9), the vocation of Abraham, he says that God called him "*from the extremities of the earth.*" He could express himself thus at Jerusalem, and consider there Chaldea, the country of Abraham, as situated at the end of the world, but he could not have spoken that way at Babylon and in Chaldea itself, where these expressions would have been without meaning. The prophet also indicates to us very clearly that he is far from the shores of the Euphrates, when he says, in addressing himself to the captives: *Depart, depart, go ye out from thence* (lii. 11). Had he been in these places, he necessarily would have said: "Depart from *here.*" In the same passage, he employs, indeed, the expression *here* to designate the dwelling of God, the temple of Jerusalem: *And now what have I here, saith the Lord: for my people are taken away gratis* (lii. 5).

Finally, the allusions to Chaldea and Babylonia are few and meager, as is natural for a writer who never saw this country. This point is so certain that Cheyne expressly says: "We have to acknowledge that this fact is true; it is even so remarkable that it inclined Ewald to believe that the author resided in Egypt. It is not unfavorable (on the contrary) to the composition of this part of the book by Isaias, who could have learned close by all that is mentioned about Babylon in these chapters, either from traveling merchants, or from the ambassadors of Merodach-Baladan."

The second principal reason they wish to bring up against the authenticity of the second part of Isaias, is the style. Behold in what terms Kuenen exposes it, in summing up what all the other Rationalistic critics said: "There are divergencies of language and style which oblige us to distinguish the author of chapters xl.-lxvi. from Isaias. The Deutero-Isaias makes use of a certain number of words foreign to Isaias, or which are used by the latter in a different sense. Thus Jehovah, for the Deutero-Isaias, is the one who *formed* Israel. He is the *creator*, the *savior*, the *liberator*, the *consolator* of Israel; He has *pity* upon His people. In the authentic prophecies of Isaias, Jehovah does not carry any of these names, no more than we find therein the expressions *as* or *to nothing*; *all flesh*, and a number of others. *Zedeg* and *zedaga* have preserved in Deutero-Isaias their primitive meaning which is that of justice; only he, and not Isaias, attaches to it the thought of reward, of particular blessing, under the title of natural fruit of justice, as he has also modified the meaning of *mishphat*. It is also peculiar to him to give to the verb *zamach* (to germ) the metaphorical meaning to *appear*. But we cannot indicate all; besides, our intention being only to show that in relation to language and style, there is just as much difference between our two authors as the results obtained had given us the right to presume." (*Opus cit.*)

The conclusions they draw from the style of a writer are often very arbitrary. "This criterion," says the rationalistic Bleek, "has always something very uncertain" (*Einleitung in das A. T.* Vol. II, p. 20). "It is proverbial that it is difficult to obtain unanimity on a question of style," says Cheyne, in regard to the question that occupies us. But, be this as it may, let us examine, after Rationalists, the style of the second part of Isaias compared with the first.

A writer, in the different epochs of his life and in treating different subjects, does not always speak in the same manner. Moreover, the difference of style Kuenen speaks of is slight; it is sufficient for us to prove this by quoting Kuenen himself: "Certain words and certain expressions," he says, "are also found in both authors (the first Isaias and the Deutero-Isaias): *The holy one of Israel*,* called *Jehovah*, as parenthesis (i. 11, 18; xxxiii. 10; lx. 1, 25); *the powerful*, followed by another word in the genetif case, epithet applied to Jehovah (i. 4; xxxix. 16; lx. 16). Kleinert has pointed out others. . . . He draws up a long list of expressions which are equally found in both, the authentic and non-authentic fragments of Isaias, thus pleading in favor of unity of the entire collection." We could considerably multiply the examples quoted parsimoniously by Kuenen, but this is useless.

The resemblance between the two parts of Isaias is so striking that the most of Rationalists suppose that the second Isaias has imitated the first. This supposition is an avowal. "No other prophet," says Seinecke, "has nourished himself with the spirit of Isaias as the author of chapters xl-lxvi; at no other do we find his characteristic manner of speaking so well reproduced." Orelli, who refers to the end of the Captivity the second part of Isaias, also says: "The points of contact (between the two parts) lead to the conclusion that if the author (of the second part) is not identical with Isaias, he appropriated his form of writing in this book." How can critics maintain after this that there are between the two collections prophecies which are so different in style that we can conclude from them on a plurality of authors? Undoubtedly, it is possible that a writer may imitate another, but this possibility is far from proving that the authors are different, for the intrinsic examination of the second part shows that it was written before the Captivity and in Palestine like the first; the style of both parts has great resemblances, and tradition explains to us these resemblances and the character of these prophecies by assuring us that all the prophecies that have come down to us under the name of Isaias are really from this prophet.

All the efforts of infidelity to rob Isaias of the most beautiful blossom of his prophetic crown are, therefore, vain and powerless.

*Is. i. 4; v. 19, 34; x. 17, 20; xii. 6; xvii. 7; xxix. 19; xxx. 11, 12, 15; xxxi. 1; xxxvii. 23; xli. 14, 16, 20; xliii. 3, 14, 15; xlv. 11; xlvii. 4; xlix. 7; liv. 5.

The writer which Ewald calls the Great Unknown has a name, the one which the Synagogue and the Church always assigned to him: he is the son of Amos; he is Isaias. The most sublime part of the complete collection of the prophecies is not anonymous; it is signed as all the other prophecies, because the prophetic inspiration had to be attested and warranted, and this signature, we read in the first verse of the collection: "The vision of Isaias, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Juda and Jerusalem in the days of Ozias, Joathan, Achaz, and Ezechias, Kings of Juda."

The Miracle of the Solar Dial.—During the sickness of Ezechias, King of Juda, Isaias, in order to give to the king a sign of the miraculous healing which he had announced to him, at the king's request, caused the solar dial to retrograde by ten lines (Is. xxxviii. 8). This prodigy has given rise to objections about which we have to say a few words. This miracle and that of Josue stopping the sun, have a great analogy. In the case of that of Josue, it is the sun itself, as presented by the sacred text, that is stopping in its course, and which suggested the idea of a great disturbance, whose consequences would extend all over the world. In the present case, the text speaks especially of the retrogradation of the shadow on the solar dial, and when the sun is mentioned once, it appears it is done more on account of the effect produced by its light on the dial than on account of anything else. This is a very peculiar phenomenon, strictly localized, and does not interest the general laws of astronomy. Hence, the derogation to the laws of nature is easier to explain, and we are not compelled to admit that there was really a retrogradation of the sun in its diurnal course. Undoubtedly, this would be nothing impossible; but nothing obliges us to believe this, and the whole can be explained easier and more naturally in another manner.

It is sufficient to admit the local phenomenon causing the shadow on the dial to be displaced for a moment. Certainly, this causes a miraculous deviation of the luminary rays that illuminated the dial, but this deviation explains itself, like the miracle of Josue, either by a direct action of the Divine power on the spreading of the rays, or by the intervention of refractory bodies or reflectors of an undetermined nature. There is no difficulty in all this if God deigns Himself to lay hands on His work. Is it

more difficult for him to change a ray of light than to keep the course of a river in its bed, or to heal suddenly a sick person? And is it necessary that the mechanism of the effect produced must be entirely known to us in order that we may believe it? must it be founded upon solid proofs which demonstrate the possibility and the truth of the Divine intervention? Certainly, nobody would dare to maintain such a thing!

CHAPTER II

JEREMIAS

THE prophecies of Jeremias have such a character of authenticity that they are universally accepted as the work of this prophet. They raise some difficulty in regard to the prophecy against Babylon (Jer. l. 1; li. 58), because, in the eyes of infidels, it is too visibly prophetic. Eichorn was the first to reject it. In this he was followed by several others. According to them, this prediction was drawn up about the end of the Captivity by a more recent writer who fraudulently interpolated it among the collection of the works of Jeremias; according to others, Jeremias was truly the author thereof, but others have added to it and made many alterations.

"The author evidently lived at Babylon," says Kuenen, "about the second half of the exile, at the time when Cyrus already had gained great victories and when he was preparing for the decisive conquest of Chaldea." Reuss is so convinced that the prophecy against Babel cannot be from Jeremias, that he has eliminated it from his book which contains the predictions of this prophet and has placed it in a different volume of his translation of the Bible, as the work of an anonymous writer, who wrote about "the end of the exile." The principal reason which he gives in favor of his opinion is the following: "The historical note added at the end of the discourse pretends to refer the latter to the fourth year of King Sedecias, that is, to the seventh year before the destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremias had given it to a person that went to Babylon, enjoining upon him to read it—it is not said to

whom — then to tie it to a stone and throw it in the Euphrates, saying: Behold how Babylon shall be destroyed. Here we have several remarks to make. First, we have to recall to mind that there are in the book of the prophet Jeremias other discourses, either from the same fourth year of Sedecias, or in general from the first years of his reign, which express in the most formal manner the certitude that the Babylonian power will continue to exist still a long time, that the present generation does not need to delude itself with vain hopes as to a near return, that the transported should, on the contrary, be resigned to their lot, create establishments, cultivate the fields and raise families in their new country. Far from seeing then the glorious coming of Persia and the victories of Cyrus, he foretells, on the contrary the ruin of this country (xlix. 34-38). And let them not tell us that, by consigning to a remote future the catastrophe which was to bring on finally the deliverance of Israel, he could foretell it in the very time when he recommended patience and submission to his unfortunate brethren. The text is opposed to this combination; for the two elements are not brought together as they ought to be in this supposition; they are separate, independent from one another, and the second, that which offers the prospect of a better future, addressed to the generation that should profit by it, is withdrawn from his knowledge, plunged into the depth of the Euphrates more than half a century before the fulfillment and is thereby null and void." (*Die Propheten.*)

"Null and void"! The prophet should have caused the so solemn promulgation of his prophecy, and this promulgation accompanied with a prophecy of action, in order that his prediction should be looked upon as null and void? But he had given orders to throw it in the Euphrates only with the view of attracting more attention to it and to engrave it more profoundly into the minds of the captives. Besides, nothing hindered the prophet and the other Jews to make copies thereof, before the original autograph was thrown into the river, and every one could read it at Babylon, as we read it to-day.

As to the contradictions they pretend to discover in this prophecy, and the other prophecies of Jeremias, they are imaginary. Jeremias had foretold that the Captivity would last only seventy years. *And when the seventy years shall be expired, I will punish the King of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord,*

for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans: and I will make it perpetual desolations (xxv. 12). The final prophecy is only the development and the complement of the first. Graf, himself, says in regard to this subject: "This prophecy contains nothing that Jeremias could not write the fourth year of the reign of Sedecias, and the style presents all the characteristics of the style of this prophet. This prophecy is, therefore, his work just as well as the other prophecies against the foreign nations." (*Commentar, c. L.*) The style of Jeremias is so easily recognizable that Ewald expressly says, although denying the authenticity of the prophecy, because it is a prophecy: "This long piece against Babel has many words, turns of style and thoughts common with Jeremias; it is quite the same kind." "Certainly," says also Kuenen, "the prophecies of Jeremias offer numerous passages parallel to chapters 1.-li. We can even affirm that in the employ of certain characteristic formulae, such as: *Thus saith the Lord Zebaoth (Sabaoth) the God of Israel,* declaration of the king, Jehovah Zebaoth is his name;† to the beasts they are gone away and departed;‡ Jehovah, the hope of Israel;§ a great ruin;|| in the time of their visitation, or on which I shall visit them;** each one in his own land;†† eternal desolation;‡‡* we can affirm that, in the employ of similar formulae, the author of chapters 1.-li. resembles nobody so much as to the prophet Jeremias." (A. Kuenen, *Opus. cit.*)

There are also two peculiar expressions which merit to be pointed out. There exists among the Hebrews a proceeding called *atbasch*, destined to disguise the words which they do not wish to write in all the letters; it consists in taking the series of letters of the alphabet in an inverse sense and to place the last letter in the place of the first, or as we would say in English, a *z* in the place of an *a*, and a *y* in the place of a *b*, and so on. Jeremias had recourse to this means in chapter xxv. of his prophecies. In order to avoid the name

* See Jer. 1. 18; li. 33; cf. vii. 3, 21; ix. 15; xvi. 9; xix. 3, etc.

† Jer. li. 57; cf. xli. 18; xlviii. 15.

‡ Jer. 1. 3; cf. ix. 10, etc.

§ Jer. 1. 7; cf. xiv. 8; xvii. 13, etc.

|| Jer. 1. 22; li. 54; cf. iv. 6; vi. 1; xiv. 17.

** Jer. 1. 27, 31; li. 18; cf. viii. 12; xiv. 21.

†† Jer. 1. 16; li. 9; cf. viii. 15.

‡‡ Jer. li. 26; cf. xxv. 12, etc.

Babylon in all the letters, he has designated it, in making use of the *atbasch*, by the words *sesak* (Babel) (Is. xxv. 26). We find the word *sesak* in the prophecy against Babylon (li. 42), and moreover, by the employ of the same proceeding, the Chaldeans figure therein under the name of *lêb gamai*, which by the interversion of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, corresponds to *Casdim* or Chaldeans. These are the only three passages of the Old Testament where the words had been transformed in this manner. As the prophecy against Babylon presents all the characteristics of the style of Jeremias, the latter similitude can only confirm its authenticity.

Let us make a last remark. Contrarily to the affirmation of Kuenen, that "the author evidently lived at Babylon," it goes forth from the prophecy itself that it was written in Palestine. *In those days*, says the prophet, *the children of Israel and of Juda shall come . . . they shall ask the way to Sion, their faces are hitherward* (l. 4-5). Therefore, all the arguments produced to refuse to Jeremias the composition of this prophecy are false.

The Letter of Jeremias to the Jews Led Away into Captivity at Babylon.—At the end of the Lamentations of Jeremias in the Greek version of the Septuagint, at the end of the prophecy of Baruch in the Vulgate (Bar. vi.), is placed a letter of Jeremias whose original Hebrew is lost. It is addressed to the Jews led away captives to Babylon by Nabuchodonosor; it has for its object to warn them against the dangers of idolatry to which they were exposed in Chaldea, and to prove to them that idols are no real gods. According to Rationalists, this letter is not the work of Jeremias. "This letter does not belong to him," says Fritsche, "because, if it were his work, we would have to suppose a Hebrew original; now it is certain that if some of the apocryphal writings were composed in Greek, it is this Letter." The author of this writing must, therefore, be a Hellenist Jew living after Alexander the Great.

This affirmation is not founded. The Letter of Jeremias, in spite of its brevity, contains comparatively numerous Hebraisms and singular phrases, which cannot be explained except from a Hebrew original: thus the author frequently employs the future instead of the present, according to Hebrew custom, etc.

The second objection against the authenticity of the Letter of Jeremias, is a pretended contradiction between this writing and certain prophecies of the priest of Anathoth. Everybody knows that

the latter had announced that the Babylonian Captivity would last seventy years (xxv. 11; xxix. 10); now the author of the Letter says that it will last *even to seven generations* (Bar. vi. 2), that is, more than two hundred years, because it is calculated that each generation is equal on an average to a duration of thirty years. The same prophet could not have contradicted himself in this manner, and the one who assigns such a considerable length of time to the Captivity cannot be the same as the one who reduced it to seventy years.

This reasoning would be conclusive if it were established that the word *dôr*, which was certainly here the original word, expressed in Hebrew a determined duration, as the word *genea* or generation in Greek and in the history of Herodotus; but there is nothing of the kind; *dôr* signifies an indeterminate time; the number "seven" is also employed as a vague number, so that the expression "seven generations" signifies a time more or less long. Besides, we have to remark that Jeremias alone could express himself thus in this Letter, for the duration of seventy years of the Captivity was so well known (cf. II. Par. xxxvi. 21; Dan. ix. 2; Zach. vii. 5; I. Esdras i. 1) that a falsifier, writing after the event, would not have failed to be more precise in this passage.

Assyro-Chaldaic archæology confirms, besides, in a striking manner the authenticity of the Letter of Jeremias. This Letter is full of allusions to the religion, morals, and customs of the Babylonians. All its pictures are perfectly exact. A Hellenist Jew, aside that he had no reason to describe the Chaldean idolatry under the Macedonian domination, could never have done this with such an irreproachable fidelity. When Layard discovered at Nimroud the bas-reliefs which represented the indigenous gods, he was greatly surprised and could not help acknowledging that his discovery was favorable to the authenticity of the Letter of Jeremias. This Letter is so to say the description of the sight before him. *You shall see in Babylon*, says the prophet, *gods of gold, and of silver, and of stone, and of wood borne upon shoulders. . . . Their gods have golden crowns upon their heads. . . . They adorn their gods. . . . This holdeth a scepter as a man, as a judge of the country, but cannot put to death one that offendeth him. And this hath in his hand a sword, or an axe* (Bar. vi. 3, 9, 10, 13-14). Can the description be more

exact? "It is certain," says Menant, "that the description of the deities which are designated in the Book of Baruch is of such an exactitude that we can easily recognize them on the antique monuments. . . . When (Jeremias) speaks of precious material of which the statues of the gods were composed, we know, for instance, that gold and silver were not spared for this pious usage, and if the prophet points out (Bar. vi. 9) the plunderings that could have taken place, we have in support a document from the archives of the palace of Assurbanipal stigmatizing the infidelity of a high functionary; he had stolen ten talents of gold that had been entrusted to him for the erection of the statue of a deity. If the prophet makes allusion to the ornaments with which the statues of the gods were loaded, we are again supported by texts of an Assyrian origin. A certain number of Assyro-Chaldean documents teach us that the statues of stone or of metal placed in the sanctuaries of the temples and representing the great gods were covered with garments enriched with ornaments of gold, of silver, and of precious stones. These garments were gifts of piety of the faithful; some were due to the generosity of kings. A fragment of one of the numerous tablets of Assurbanipal . . . sufficiently tells us, in spite of its mutilated state, of the richness of these ornaments. . . . In the second column of the tablet, the detail of the ornaments is given thus: "I gave four talents . . . for the garment of the god Marduk and of the goddess Zarpanit; I have clothed Marduk and Zarpanit with Oriental marble, . . . ten precious stones whose fame is great. I have adorned the garments of their great Deities, the tiaras with raised horns, the tiaras of power, the insigniæ of their deity, to complete their custom" (*Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, Vol. II.). According to the words of the prophet (Bar. vi. 8), these ornaments were given to the idols as to *a maiden that loveth to go gay*. Now, Hyschius quotes a passage from Berosus where there is question of a priestess by the name of Sarachero, which adorns the goddess Hera. There was, therefore, a particular ceremony. This ceremony is represented on a great number of Assyro-Chaldean cylinders. The Museum of the Louvre, in Paris, possesses a certain number of them. . . . We quote, for instance, the numbers 447 and 448 which represent two episodes of the toilet of a goddess. . . .

"A passage of the Book of Baruch (vi. 42-43) has already been brought in connection with a ceremony that has been transmitted to us by Herodotus. . . . When the prophet speaks of women with cords about them that form the object of covetousness of the passengers, it is certain that he makes allusion to the custom . . . described by Herodotus (i. 199).

"We have pointed out in the Book of Baruch only material verifications so to say. It has been evident for us that the indications of Jeremias were founded upon personal observations. The prophet beheld the images which he describes; the ceremonies to which he referred were ceremonies (of which those to whom he wrote should be soon witnesses). . . . The modern discoveries have permitted to restore the frame in the midst of which all these scenes could take place and the word of the prophet finds therein immediately its application" (J. Menant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*) as well as the proof of its authenticity.

CHAPTER III

BARUCH

THE prophecy of Baruch has come to us only in Greek. It is rejected as apocryphal by all the Protestants. Luther was the first who spoke of it with contempt. "Very poor is the book which bears the name of good Baruch," he says; "it is incredible that the servant of Jeremias, who called himself Baruch, had not a broader and more open mind than this Baruch." Eichhorn, in his turn, says: "The Book of Baruch is one of those numerous and unfortunate fictions, as the Hellenists liked them, who manufactured them in taking for starting point any fact or any old legend, but without taste, without knowledge that was becoming to the times in which they placed them and to the character of those in whose name they spoke." Keerl sums up this prophecy in saying: "This writing is an invention of an ignorant liar."

Several less fanatical Protestants cannot help acknowledging how these accusations are false and some even praise the Book of Baruch,

although denying its authenticity. "Whilst the Catholics have accepted this book as canonical," says Fritzsche, "the Protestants have ranked it with right among the apocryphals, but the latter have done this, until at present, with little authority" (*Handbuch zu den Apokryphen*). "This little book," says Ewald, "is not at all an unworthy echo of the ancient prophetic voices; it contains, on the contrary, many strong conceptions in the spirit of antiquity and has about the law original views." (*Geschichte des Volkes Israels*.)

It is not enough, however, to acknowledge the merit of the Book of Baruch; we must, moreover, admit its authenticity. Nothing, in its content, is opposed to this. "I find that the three pieces of Baruch (i. 15; v. 9)," says the Jewish historian, Herzfeld, "are worthy of being placed beside the best productions in the time of the Captivity; it is very improbable that a writer living one century later could have described the situation with such a vivacity and fitness. . . . There is absolutely nothing in these pieces that indicates in any manner a posterior date." (*Geschichte des Volkes Israels*.)

The objections they seek to bring up against the authenticity of the Book of Baruch are without foundation. The first, raised only by some critics like Keil and Hävernicks, is that it should have been written originally in Greek and consequently a long time after Baruch. The objection is so evidently false, that according to Fritzsche and Schürer, the first three chapters, according to de Wette, Ewald, Kneucker and others, the entire book, was primitively written in Hebrew. Origen knew of this original Semitic text. Theodotion translated it. Until in the Greek version of the Septuagint, the Semitic idiotisms are so visible that the Rationalistic Davidson justly laughed at the vain efforts of Keil and Hävernicks to deny them. The construction of the phrase is Hebraic and not Greek, the different members being connected among one another simply by the conjunction *and*. Many expressions are not of Hellenic origin, for instance: *We beg mercy in thy sight* (ii. 19). "In thy face" is a Hebrew idiotism, and "mercy" signifies our prayer, because the original corresponding word was probably *tehinnâh*, which has the double meaning of mercy and prayer. In several places, we read "to work," instead of "serving" the false gods or the king of Babylon, because *abad* signifies both to work and to

serve (Bar. i. 22; ii. 21, 22, 24). Elsewhere the translator speaks of the "sackcloth of supplication," when it should be "the sackcloth of affliction" (Bar. iv. 20), that is, the garment they wore as a sign of affliction. The word *enút* which he translated *délésis*, as in the Psalms, signifies indeed affliction. "The merchants of Merrha" (iii. 23) designate "the merchants of Madian," because the translator mistook a *d* for an *r*, on account of the resemblance of these two letters in Hebrew writing, etc,

The second objection against the authenticity of the Book of Baruch is drawn from the following facts. It is related that the prophet went to Babylon five years after the ruin of Jerusalem and that he read his prophecies before Jechonias, King of Juda. They maintain that these details cannot be historical. Nothing however proves that they are false; also several adversaries of Baruch have renounced of making use of them against him. Baruch, who was the secretary of Jeremias, followed his master into Egypt, the first or second year after the destruction of the Temple (about 584). Three or four years afterwards, he went to Babylon to console and exhort the captives. Being there, nothing was easier for him than to read his prophecies before Jechonias, who was not locked up as prisoners are with us, but who enjoyed considerable liberty.

An incontestable proof that the Book of Baruch is apocryphal, continue the enemies of its authenticity, is that it names Joakim as high-priest of the Jews, the fifth year after the ruin of Jerusalem (581 Bar. i. 7). Now, "the fifth year after the taking of Jerusalem, the high-priest was Josedec," says Bertholdt, or Saraías, as Keerl maintains.

Whether it was Josedec or Saraías, matters very little. The text does not say that Joakim was pontiff; it calls him simply priest. When he is especially mentioned, it is because he is a more important personage than the others, but from this it does not follow that he possessed the honors of the pontificate. At the moment of the ruin of the capital of Juda, the high-priest was Saraías; he was killed at Reblatha (Jer. lii. 24-27). His son, Josedec, who ought to have been his successor, was carried off to Babylon (I. Par. vi. 15). The captives, therefore, could not send assistance to Josedec at Jerusalem, but could easily, as the text says, send assistance to Joakim, who was, according to his genealogy (see Bar. i. 7, compared with I. Par. vi. 13-15),

a near relative of Josedec and undoubtedly replaced him in his capital.

They object, moreover, against the authenticity of the Book of Baruch to two historical indications it contains, to wit: that the Jews offered at Jerusalem, at the moment when this prophet wrote, *sacrifices at the altar of the Lord*, and that they read his prophecy *"on festival days in the house of the Lord"* (Bar. i. 10, 14). At this date, they assure us, there was neither altar nor house of the Lord. Hence, only a falsifier could imagine such rude anachronisms.

As to the first point, we can admit that the altar of the true God was destroyed, during the ruin of the Temple, by the troops of Nabuchodonosor, because this destruction is very probable, although it is not mentioned anywhere; but, we are hardly permitted to question that the priests immediately rebuilt the altar to offer to God the sacrifices prescribed by the law; nothing was easier, for we must not forget that the sacrifices took place in the open air, in the midst of a yard; little work was, therefore, required to restore the altar of holocausts.

From the time the victims were regularly immolated in honor of the true God,—and this is the answer to the second part of the difficulty,—the Jews naturally assembled on festival days in the parvis of the Temple, as they were used to do before, and there they could read the book sent from Babylon by the captives. This place of reunion is called "the house" or "the Temple of the Lord," as the Vulgate translates, because it was the name they were in the habit of giving to that part of Mount Moriah where Salomon had built the Temple. But from this expression it does not follow at all that "the house," the building they called in the strict sense "the house of the Lord" was still erect. The proof that these words are employed here in their broad sense, is that the public ceremonies never took place in the house itself; that they could not read therein anything to the people, for the people never entered this place; the reading of prophecies could be done only in the outside yards, which were called temple and by extension house of God, because there they immolated the victims. These yards never ceased to exist and, consequently, they could assemble therein the fifth year of the ruin of Jerusalem as before the campaign of Nabuchodonosor. We have, besides, a formal proof of the oblation of sacrifices about this time in Jeremias, who employs the same expres-

sions as Baruch. He relates, indeed, that after the destruction of the Temple, eighty men from Sichem, Silo and Samaria came to Jerusalem, bringing offerings and incense *to offer in the house of the Lord* (Jer. xli. 5. See also I. Esd. ii. 68; iii. 2, 3, 6). This passage is conclusive. None of the difficulties they allege against the Book of Baruch authorize, therefore, to question its authenticity.

CHAPTER IV

EZECHIEL

I. AUTHENTICITY OF EZECHIEL.—The authenticity of the prophecies of Ezechiel is universally admitted: "It cannot be questioned," says de Wette, "that Ezechiel himself, who speaks almost always in the first person, wrote his prophecies." "The Book of Ezechiel," says Gesenius, "is one of the small number of those which from the beginning to end present such a unity of style and saying that this alone is sufficient to remove all suspicion of interpolation in any of its parts." "As to the Book of Ezechiel," says Nöldecke, "in its essential parts it is such as has gone forth from the hands of the prophet." "Absolutely nothing," says Kuenen, "hinders that Ezechiel is not charged himself to draw up his book of prophecies. From one end to the other the book is perfectly authentic and the various fragments therein follow one another in a simple and natural order." "The order in which these pieces are arranged is so simple and natural, and proves a plan so well conceived and so easy to discover that we are inclined to believe," says Reuss in his turn, "that this arrangement is due to the author himself."

Undoubtedly, if negative criticism is more accommodating for Ezechiel than for the other prophets, it is because it does not find in his book any account of miracles and believes to be capable of explaining the predictions which it contains through previsions or literary artifices. They even pretend that the study of Ezechiel has been neglected by the faithful, because he does not satisfy their taste on account of the mystical tendencies. "In every respect, he merits to be better known," says Reuss. "By a singular

caprice of the studies applied to the literature and religion of the Israelites, he is less known than his colleagues; probably because Christian commentators found in him less than in the others what they sought with preference in the Hebrew texts: direct relations, true or pretended, with the facts and ideas of the Gospel." (*Die Propheten.*)

The study and explanation of Ezechiel has not been neglected neither by the Fathers nor by the doctors of the Church, but Isaias, for instance, has attracted more attention, because the first of the great prophets is in some sort, as they have said with right, the Evangelist of the Old Testament. The mission of Ezechiel, like that of Jeremias, referred more exclusively to his contemporaries, whom both were charged to console and uphold in the tribulations of captivity, whilst that of Isaias embraced all times. Besides, they all have been equally prophets and under this title, all received supernatural revelations. As to the latter point, Rationalists refuse the gift of God to Ezechiel like to the others, but they do this because they are imbued with a partisan spirit and are unable to give any other proof but the pretended impossibility of the supernatural. Listen what Reuss says as to this subject:

"We know in a general manner the date of his book (of Ezechiel), or rather the dates of several fragments composing it. . . . There is, however, one reserve to be made as to the subject of these chronological accounts; not precisely in so far that they should serve to determine in a general manner the period of the prophet, but in so far that one would like to conclude that the latter knew, so to say, day by day, on the shores of Kebar, what passed at the foot of Mount of Olives. It is true that there are passages that suggest a similar interpretation, that seem to require this; but we believe that approaches of this kind, which indicate, for the composition of such or such a piece in regard to an event which happens in Judea, the very day when this event takes place hundreds of miles away, belong to poetic fiction. We shall see very soon that of all the faculties of the mind, it is the imagination which Ezechiel used the most in the compilation of his writings." (*Opus cit.*)

The prophet who has described the mysterious cherubim and the vision of the dried up bones had undoubtedly a powerful imagination, but what he describes, God had shown to him. We are not

permitted to alter the meaning of his words; they "require" to be taken in a prophetic sense; it is sufficient to read them to convince ourselves of this and his contemporaries would not have regarded him as a great prophet, if his predictions had been only a "poetic fiction." Never had the English people who lived in the time of Milton, the idea to take this poet for a prophet, because he makes Adam foretell, through a poetic artifice, the principal events that would happen to his race, until the time when the poet wrote his *Paradise Lost*. No unprejudiced man can read the prophecies of Ezechiel without being convinced that the one who drew them up really believed himself a prophet.

II. OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE PROPHECIES OF EZECHIEL.—Rationalists do not formulate, however, objections of detail against the prophecies of Ezechiel, but infidels of the last century have often attacked them and their sarcasms against this prophet are so well known that it is necessary to say a few words about them. Tindal believed that we cannot accept a part of the accounts contained in the book of this prophet, because they contain commandments unworthy of God or of an impossible execution, such, for instance, to make a drawing of Jerusalem on a clay tablet in order to figure its siege. (A brick found at Babylon and representing the plan of this city, crossed by the Euphrates, has shown that the fact was not only possible, but quite conformable to the customs of Chaldea.)

The pleasantries of the same English infidel, renewed with long developments by Voltaire on what they have called the "breakfast of Ezechiel" (iv. 9-15), in order to show how the commandment given to the prophet was unworthy of the Deity, are a sign of bad faith or show a great ignorance of the Oriental customs. When God prescribes to His prophet to make use of dried human excrement, instead of any other fuel, in order to point out the extreme scarcity to which the people will be reduced, and when, on account of the repugnance which Ezechiel displays he is permitted to substitute animal excrement, this conduct of God may surprise us, but it does not astonish the Orientals who are in the habit of preparing every day their bread with this kind of fuel. "In Egypt, in the neighborhood of Cairo, at Hubbah, and in Cairo itself," says the Abbé Vigouroux, "we saw women kneading cow dung, with a little earth and straw, into the form of round cakes

to be used instead of wooden fuel, which is very scarce. At Nazareth," the same author continues, "we also saw women kneading cow dung for the same purpose and a bread-oven heated with the same fuel." Nothing is more common than this usage in a great part of Asia. In India it has even a kind of sacred character.

"To construct a funeral pile in southern India, they lay at the bottom of the small cavity (previously dug out) and on its whole length, a row of wooden sticks (sandal-wood for the wealthy Hindoo), transversely arranged, which they cover with a layer of cow dung flattened and dried; it is the best fuel; besides it is sacred, it is the *purificator* par excellence. The Hindoo women are charged with its harvest, and in spite of the numerous jewels, and the rich garments they are covered with, they are not afraid to gather it in the streets, and after having rolled it in the dust, they carry it majestically in their hands to their dwelling places, and then, after having flattened it, they put it upon the walls to dry in the sun. The most of the Hindoo castes possess this new kind of ornament." (J. Philaire, *La cremation dans l'Inde meridionale*.)

The local customs explain, therefore, quite naturally "the Breakfast of Ezechiél."

They have also sought to turn into ridicule the order given to the prophet to eat a book (iv. 4-6), to sleep 390 days on his left side and forty days on his right side (xii. 3-7), to remove all the furniture from his house during the day and to leave it himself in the evening through a hole pierced in the wall; but these are all symbols and prophecies of action destined to strike more strongly than simple words the imagination of the people. Besides, we are not obliged to accept them in the literal sense, particularly the eating of a book. Many commentators are of the opinion that all this took place only in a vision. "Ezechiél," says Kuenen, "has often recourse to tableaux or symbolic acts, which ordinarily accompany the prophetic visions he makes known to us. These symbolic acts are for the most part of such a nature that the prophet can hardly be censured for having accomplished them." Catholic interpreters are of the same opinion.

CHAPTER V

DANIEL

I. ATTACKS OF RATIONALISTS AGAINST THE PROPHECIES OF DANIEL.—Rationalistic critics are unanimous in rejecting the authenticity of the Book of Daniel. It contains very circumstantial predictions, hence it must have been composed, according to them, only *post eventum*, that is, after the events of which it speaks had already been fulfilled. Let us listen to Kuenen :

"The author of the Book of Daniel does not see any further than the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, an event . . . which according to him coincides with the coming of the Messiah. This exegetical result permits us to come to a certain conclusion as to the date of the book. And first, the various facts which we have pointed out are absolutely incompatible with the traditional hypothesis which maintains the authenticity of this book. . . . If Daniel is the author, he could know the future only by a direct revelation from God; but then, the errors into which he falls must necessarily be attributed to the same source, a fatal consequence to which he can escape only in having recourse to gratuitous hypotheses or forced explanations. Often the author ignores or knows badly the contemporary or about contemporary events of Daniel's time. Can the traditional hypothesis ever hope to render an account of a phenomenon so surprising for it? We are fortunately not obliged to content ourselves with this purely negative result. In summing up the facts . . . we see that the date of the book reveals itself. The author has a wonderful knowledge of the principal events of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (175-163 B. C.), for at least those which concern Palestine; the worship of the temple has been already interrupted, the small idolatrous altar has been established (twenty-fifth of chisleu 167 B. C.); the commencement of the revolt of the Machabees (166 B. C.) is for the author still a recent fact; in return Judas Machabeus has not yet carried his victory over Lysias (164 B. C.); the restoration of the worship in the temple (the twenty-fifth of chisleu of the year 164) has not yet taken place. What must we conclude from all this, save that the Book of Daniel must have been written in the year 165 B. C.?" (*Kritische Geschichte des A. T.*)

Such is the argumentation of Rationalists. The author of the Book of Daniel is inaccurately acquainted with the time in which the personage of this name lived; hence he is posterior to him. On the contrary, he is perfectly acquainted with the events that pointed out the beginnings of the war of independence under the Machabees; therefore he lived in this period. Such is the reasoning we always meet with under the pen of infidels; prophecy is impossible; consequently, the so called predictions which announced historical facts had been written only when these facts had already been fulfilled.

In the present case we acknowledge that Daniel fully knew the history of the Machabees, because God had revealed it to him, but we affirm that he did not less accurately know and describe the history of his time, that of Nabuchodonosor and the fall of Babylon under the blows of Cyrus. Providence, to verify its prophet, has permitted that Assyriology, during our days, revived a long buried past, in order to prove the exactitude of the tableaux contained in the Book of Daniel. Thanks to Assyro-Chaldean discoveries, we can prove now that the claimed errors of this prophet were only errors of his critics. To-day, ignorance alone could reproach him with a lack of historic truth. Negative criticism has the pretension to speak only in the name of science and, among its adepts, like Reuss and Kuenen who make the science of Scripture a specialty, are ignorant of modern discoveries which confirm the veracity of Daniel in such a striking manner! Even Assyriologists imbued with rationalism are careful to repeat the objections which other infidels never tire of repeating, and those who do not deny the supernatural render homage to the exactitude of the descriptions of the prophet.

The Book of Daniel may be divided into two parts. The first six chapters are historical and devoted to the account of various events. An appendix in Greek, forming two chapters, relates the history of Susanna and that of Bel and the Dragon. Behold what Francis Lenormant says of the first six chapters of Daniel: "I have to admit that a part of the arguments appealed to by Corrodi, Eichorn, Jahn, etc., against the Book of Daniel have appeared to me for a long time as not disproved. I accepted their opinion and I have even printed it. . . . Solely and purely scientific reasons . . . have prevailed on me to change my opinion . . . and to return

to the accounts of tradition. . . . My new conviction formed itself upon the study of the cuneiform texts, whose control was wanting to form a correct judgment, and which now, I believe, we have to revise. . . . The more I read and reread the Book of Daniel, in comparing it with the accounts of the cuneiform texts, the more I am struck with the truth of the picture which the first six chapters trace of the Babylonian court and of the special ideas in the time of Nabuchodonosor; the more I am penetrated with the conviction that they have been written at Babylon itself and in a time that approached the events; finally, the more I meet with impossibilities to make its first authorship come down to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes." (*La divination et la science des présages chez les Chaldéens*, p. 170.)

M. Menant says the same: "The book which bears the name of Daniel and whose author they have criticized contains nevertheless precise details on the position of the Jews during the Babylonian Captivity, and to-day these facts appear to have been borrowed from a great truth. . . . All we have said in regard to the Book of Baruch on the material facts which the inspired author had established apply themselves to the Book of Daniel. . . . His book . . . describes what he saw, the events with which he was mingled; we can add that he speaks a language which we would no longer understand if his words had been spoken among different surroundings. . . . The facts which he describes are exact; . . . the account of his visions themselves was conformable to the ideas current in his time. . . . The Book of Daniel . . . reports traits of the Chaldean civilization, in the time of Nabuchodonosor, with an exactitude which an apocryphal author would never have attained." (*Babylone et Chaldée*, p. 239.)

These testimonies would be already sufficient to refute the objections of critics who have no special competency in Assyriology, like Kuenen and Reuss; but it will not be useless to show in detail the falsity of their allegations. We shall examine first the objections formulated against the first six chapters of Daniel, that is, against the historical facts which form the first part of this book.

II. AUTHENTICITY OF THE FIRST PART OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL.—The first objection they raise against the account of Daniel is not drawn from the history of Chaldea but from that of the Jews. Kuenen exposes it in the following terms: "The author

reports (Dan. i. 1-4) that the third year of the reign of Joakim, Nabuchodonosor took Jerusalem, carried off a portion of the sacred vessels of the temple and led away captives to Babylon some of the most influential inhabitants of the capital, perhaps even the person of the king. We know, however, through the Book of Jeremias, that nothing of the kind took place under the reign of Joakim, and, in every case, that no event of this kind took place the third year of his reign. It is true that quite a vague passage of the Second Book of Chronicles (xxxvi. 6-7) would seem to imply the truth of the facts here related; but this passage merits little confidence, and it is very probable that the author of the Book of Daniel permitted himself to be led into error by the inexact account of the Book of Chronicles." (*Opus cit.*)

"Nothing of the kind took place under the reign of Joakim." Behold a very extraordinary affirmation. Without speaking of the formal testimony of the Paralipomena, which have quite another weight than that of modern negative criticism, we open the Books of Kings and read therein: *In his days, Nabuchodonosor, king of Babylon, came up, and Joakim became his servant three years; then again he rebelled against him. And the Lord sent against him the rovers of the Chaldeans, and the rovers of Syria, and the rovers of Moab, and the rovers of the children of Ammon* (IV. Ki. xxiv. 1-2). Nabuchodonosor, therefore, did make war upon Joakim. About both this war and the history of Manasses, the Books of Paralipomena give us more details than the Books of Kings, but what we read in the text quoted is sufficient to explain what the Book of Daniel reports; for the kings of this period never made war, and never imposed any tribute, without carrying off precious vessels and captives (Dan. i. 1-4). All the cuneiform inscriptions in regard to the military campaigns verify them, and to deny them would be denying clear daylight. If the historical facts of the Book of Daniel had been imagined by a falsifier, he would have naturally thought rather of the transportation under Sedecias, which was more famous, or of that which took place under Jechonias, to which Ezechiel belonged (Ezech. i. 2); truth alone made the author designate the third year of the reign of Joakim.

"But," says Kuenen, "we know from the Book of Jeremias that nothing similar took place under the reign of Joakim." This affir-

mation is not less false than the preceding. Jeremias expressly foretells in his prophecies the campaign of Nabuchodonosor in which Daniel was led away captive; the most of the commentators are agreed in acknowledging this (Jer. xxv. 1), and certainly it supposes so much more a first transportation in this time, because with this date (606 B.C.) commence the seventy years of the Babylonian Captivity, the prediction of which had rendered him particularly famous among his contemporaries.

After having established the date of the transportation of Daniel, Kuenen contests again what is related of Daniel's education and of the first part of his life. "According to the first chapter," he says, "Daniel and his three friends would have been admitted in the college of the Babylonian sages. Did the Chaldeans really give them access among their ranks?"

Yes, undoubtedly. We must not imagine that the Chaldeans had the same ideas and customs we have. They were in the habit of providing themselves with slaves from different nations, and when captive children had been educated according to the Chaldean fashion, they were regarded as Chaldeans. Besides, the kings were in need of officers that had been born in the countries of which they had rendered themselves masters. If criticism has contested this trait of the history of Daniel, it did not expect that the Assyro-Chaldaic monuments would furnish the proof that they accepted foreigners in the royal schools. Now, behold what they teach us: they selected the best young men and instructed them in the palace-schools together with the natives. Sennacherib accidentally relates to us that a young Chaldean, named Belibni, had been educated at Ninive, in the palace, through the cares of Sargon and afterwards placed by himself on the throne of Babylon: "Belibni, son of a sage near Suanna, who as a young child had been educated in my palace, I established him over the kingdom of Sumir and Akkad." (*Cylinder of Bellino*, line 13.)

The custom of introducing foreigners at the court of Assyrian kings and to entrust them afterwards with higher functions is, therefore, established by cuneiform documents.

Other objection. — In an idolatrous feast, related by Daniel, the enumeration of a certain number of musical instruments is found. Some bear Greek names. Rationalists wish to conclude from this that the book where we read these Greek words was written, only

under the Macedonian domination, a long time after the period of Daniel. Among others, Reuss says: "In this enumeration there are three words of Greek origin, the guitar (*kitharis*), the harp (*psalterion*), and the bagpipe (*symphonia*). The employ of similar words betrays the epoch of the author."

Several critics add a fourth instrument, the sambuke (*sabkd*). Reuss correctly excludes this, because it is certainly an Oriental and not a Greek word. Athenæus and Strabo say expressly that this instrument is of Syrian origin, that is, of Semitic origin. There are, therefore, for the most, three words whose Greek origin we can accept. To explain how they are found in Daniel, it is good to remark first that these instruments were known in Asia Minor since the time of Nabuchodonosor. The Assyrians and Chaldeans had a very great taste for music; they often represented musicians on their monuments. A bas-relief of Assurbanipal, among others, shows us a band of musicians whereon we see seven harp players, and in the midst of them two flute players; another musician, the third to the left, plays an instrument still used in the East and called *santur*. The name of *santur* appears to be only an abbreviation of the word *pesantcrin*, by which the sacred author designates here the *psalterion* (Dan. iii. 3, 5, 7, 10, 15). On other bas-reliefs, we see figured the other instruments of which Daniel speaks.

There is, therefore, no anachronism in his account as to the things. Is there any in the words? They cannot prove this. To establish this, we would have to be able to show that the Assyro-Chaldeans had no relation whatever with the Greeks, neither direct nor indirect. Now, not only can they not prove this, but the contrary is certain. The Phœnicians were tributaries to the kings of Assyria first, and afterwards to Nabuchodonosor. This mercantile people spread in Asia the products of the Greeks, and, among these products, the musical instruments perfected by the Hellenists, must have been particularly in great demand by the Asiatics, who were great lovers of harmony. And as it always happens in the importation of merchandise, the foreign name introduces itself with the object, so the instrument kept its Greek name at the court of Nabuchodonosor.

But the Asiatics not only knew the Greeks through intermediaries. We know from ancient authors that the kings of Ninive

had direct relations with them. Berosus relates that Sennacherib conquered a Greek army in Cilicia (*Historicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*); Abydenus teaches us that the son of Sennacherib, Asaraddon, whom he calls Axerdis, had Greek auxiliaries in pay. (In Euseb. *Chron. arm.*) These two princes were both masters of Babylon. We find, besides, at Babylon itself, and in the army of Nabuchodonosor, the brother of the poet Alcaeus, Antimenidas. (In Strabo, XIII. ii.) What is, therefore, astonishing that Greek words were known at the court of Nabuchodonosor.

The miracle which took place, on the occasion of the festival of which we have spoken, in favor of the companions of Daniel and an analogous miracle which later on saved the prophet himself in the lion's den, furnish for Kuenen other objections. He says: "To believe chapters iii. vi; (Dan. iii. 1-6, 28, 29; vi. 7-10, 26-28), Nabuchodonosor would have ordered all his subjects without distinction, in spite of all the differences of origin and religion, to adore one and the same image; and Darius in his turn would have published an edict tending to suppress during an entire month all exercises of worship in his vast monarchy; the two kings would have acknowledged without any reserve, the absolute sovereignty of the God of Israel, and this without that such prodigious events had left the least trace in literature or history. These chapters . . . (Dan. iii. 1; vi. 17, 18, 24) also contain other improbabilities; the statue which the king caused to be erected would have been ten times higher than wide, and, in spite of its colossal proportions, it would have been entirely of gold. The lion's den would have been a kind of well closed by means of a stone."

The facts are somewhat disfigured in the exposition which Kuenen makes of them: "The two kings" did not acknowledge "without any reserve the absolute sovereignty of the God of Israel;" they did not abjure polytheism and their own religion, they only confessed the power of Jehovah, God of Israel, which according to their idea could be easily reconciled with their religious belief, because, according to this belief, each nation had its own, real and true god. Nabuchodonosor, in the proclamation to his people, makes explicit profession of paganism: he speaks of Daniel, who is called, in the Chaldaic language, *Baltassar*, according to the name of my god (Dan. iv. 5) (Bel), he says, and he speaks expressly three times of gods (iv. 5, 6, 15). As to

Darius, praising the God of Israel, he did what Cyrus himself did in regard to the Babylonian gods, as is attested by the inscriptions of this prince recently discovered:

26. "With the work of repairing the sanctuary of Marduk, I occupied myself.

27. To me (Cyrus) the king, his adorer, and to Cambyases, my son, the offspring of my heart and to my faithful army,

28. (Marduk) graciously granted his favor . . .

35. And every day I prayed to Bel and Nebo, in order that they might prolong my days and increase my prosperity, and repeat to Marduk, my lord, that thy adorer, Cyrus the king, and his son Cambyases. . . ." (H. Rawlinson, *Clay Cylinder of Cyrus the Great*.)

The end is wanting, but the passage we have quoted sufficiently proves that if Cyrus, adorer of Ahuramazda, spoke in these terms of Marduk (Merodach) and of Nebo, Darius could speak, as he did, of the true God in the Book of Daniel.

In regard to the objections of Kuenen against the statue erected by Nabuchodonosor, they are also refuted by Assyriology. "What we have to point out," says Menant, as to the subject of this episode, "is the erection of a colossal statue of gold in the plain of Babylon. Not only had this fact nothing impossible, but had also its reality. The gigantic sculptures of Ninive give us the proof. As to the metal employed in this work of art, we know that analagous statues existed; that of the sepulchre of Belus was forty cubits high, and certainly they were not the only statues they raised at that time. Finally, we have pointed out already the unfaithfulness of an officer who, charged with the execution of a golden statue, had stolen a part of this precious metal." "There is nothing improbable," says Oppert, "in the existence of a statue having sixty cubits (about ninety-nine feet) of height and six cubits (nine feet) of thickness, so much more as the name of Doura, in the fields (*medindh*) of Babylon, agrees with the inscriptions as well as with the actual conformation of the ruin (of el-Mokattat). . . . Looking at this hill, we are immediately struck with the resemblance which it presents to a pedestal of a colossal statue, for instance, that of the Bavaria at Munich, and everything goes to show that here was the statue of which the Book of Daniel speaks." (*Expedition scientifique en Mesopotamie*.)

We have to remark, besides, that the text does not say that the statue was of massive gold. It is probable that, like many other Babylonian statues (Dan. xiv. 6; Bar. vii. 50), it was of baked earth, covered with more or less thick plates of gold. Moreover, when the sacred writer tells us that the work of art, erected by Nabuchodonosor, was six cubits wide, he naturally indicates thereby the width of the base. The measures given for the height must undoubtedly be understood, not of the statue properly speaking, but of the whole of the monument. The artists of the catacombs understood the text in the sense that the statue was placed upon a column. But, as to the latter point, be it as it may, it is certain that the account of Daniel is perfectly conformable to what we know in regard to the tastes and customs of the Babylonians.

Finally, as to the lions' den, it is equally certain that this has also a trait of local color. The two kinds of executions mentioned in the Book of Daniel, the fiery furnace and the lions' den, were in use in Chaldea and in Assyria. The bas-reliefs of the bronze gates of Balawat represent a furnace into which they threw men alive like the companions of Daniel. The texts of Assurbanipal teach us that, according to the example of his grandfather Sennacherib, he condemned his enemies to be devoured by lions:

6. "The rest of the living men, in the midst of (wild) bulls and lions,

7. like Sennacherib, the father of my father, in the midst, I threw,

8. I also, (following) their steps, these men

9. in the midst of these animals, I threw." (F. Talbot, *Illustrations of the prophet Daniel from the Assyrian Writings*.)

"The lions' den became for us," says M. Lenormant, "a detail of topical exactitude and precision, in the presence of wonderful bas-reliefs representing hunting scenes of Assurbanipal, transported to London, whereon we see lions brought forth from their cages, where they were kept for the amusement of the king." (*La divination chez les Chaldeens*, p. 192.)

But without troubling themselves about Assyro-Chaldaic customs, Rationalists, and Kuenen, in particular, deny the facts one after another. Even the madness of Nabuchodonosor is for them a fable. Kuenen says: "According to chapter iii. 31—iv. 34, Nabuchodonosor would have fallen into what they call a *lycanthropy* and, against

all analogy, this sickness should have lasted during seven years (Dan. iii. 20, 22, 29). the king would have eaten grass and his hair should have grown 'like the feathers of eagles, and his nails like claws of birds.' Had the author stopped here! But no, the king himself takes care to inform all his subjects about the state through which he had passed. At no profane historian do we find the least mention of a similar event." (*Opus cit.*)

Even if we would not find any mention of a similar event at any profane historian, what would follow from this? That the fact related by Daniel is not true? Not at all. How many traits of ancient history are there which we know only through a single testimony and which nobody questions? No history properly speaking of Nabuchodonosor has come down to us. We know only some scattered traits thereof. Consequently, there are many details of his life which are unknown to us, or poorly understood, or known only through one sole historian. But in regard to Nabuchodonosor's lycanthropy, if no writer of antiquity speaks thereof in such a circumstantial manner as Daniel, we can hardly help seeing an allusion to this sickness of the great king in a passage of Berosus, and wherein he tells us that Nabuchodonosor "having fallen sick, changed his life" (cf. Josephus, *Cont. Apion.* i. 20). Abydenus has also preserved the remembrance of a tradition according to which the king of Babylon would have foretold the future fall of his kingdom. Eusebius has inserted this fragment in his *Evangelical Preparation* (ix. 41), because he considered it as a confirmation of the account of Daniel. Indeed, it is hard not to recognize therein a disfigured echo of the events related with exactitude by the prophet.

Kuenen is especially shocked that the great king of Babylon should have *eaten grass like an ox*; his hair growing like *the feathers of eagles*, his nails like *claws of birds*. However, experience establishes and all those who have visited insane asylums, noticed that the insane are often long-haired. It is also certain that the nails, if they are not pared, grow crooked and become much like the claws of birds. Finally, persons attacked with lycanthropy or *insania zoanthropica*, believing themselves changed into beasts, sometimes supported themselves upon grass like herbivorous animals. M. Rosch quotes an example, among others of this kind, of which he has been a witness himself in a hospital at

Wurtemberg. Physicians, far from contradicting the description of Daniel, on the contrary, admire its exactitude.

Quite another important objection is drawn from the silence of all the ancient authors about Baltasar, King of Babylon. In regard to this subject, Kuenen writes: "The author reports that the taking of Babylon by the Medo-Persians took place under the reign of Baltasar, *son of Nabuchodonosor*. Now the last king of the Chaldeans was called Nabonidus, and was not even a relative of Nabuchodonosor. It is impossible to identify Nabonidus and Baltasar, or to consider the latter as a son of Nabonidus and his successor at the time when Babylon was taken. The (Scriptural) account is opposed to this, as well as the chronological accounts which are found elsewhere in the Book of Daniel (v. 2, 11, 13, 18, 22, 30; vi. 1). Everything tends to prove that our author knew only two Babylonian kings, namely, Nabuchodonosor and Baltasar."

Certainly, "it is impossible to identify Nabonidus and Bel-satzar," or Baltasar, but when Kuenen says that it "is impossible . . . to consider the latter (Baltasar) as a son of Nabonidus (or Nabonahid)" he is badly informed, and the monuments prove to him just the contrary, for Nabonidus tells us quite plainly in his inscriptions that Baltasar was his eldest son. In a prayer addressed to the god Sin (the moon), this prince expresses himself thus: "In regard to Baltasar, my eldest son, the offspring of my heart, the fear of thy great divinity place in his heart, in order that he may not deliver himself to sin, and be not inclined towards injustice." (*Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*.)

From the Book of Daniel it goes forth that Baltasar commanded at Babylon during the siege of this city by Cyrus, and that he occupied not the first, but the second rank in the kingdom; for, wishing to give to the prophet the greatest reward that was in his power, that is, the first place after him, he tells him that he will make him "the third" of the kingdom (Dan. v. 16), which proves that he himself is only the second. The inscriptions of Nabonidus explain and confirm all these details. This monarch was then outside the city; he had left its command to his eldest son, who thus found himself charged with the defense of the capital and fulfilled the royal functions. What the Book of Daniel tells us of Baltasar is so much more remarkable and conclusive in

favor of its authenticity because no ancient historian had preserved to us the name of the son of Nabonidus and he was known to us only through the writings of the Jewish prophet, before it had been recovered within the last years in the cuneiform inscriptions of the king his father. Therefore, it can be seen how false the accusations were, and how the details, from which they wished to draw objections, transform themselves into proofs.

The only thing true in the objection of Rationalists is that Baltasar was not a "son of Nabuchodonosor" in the proper sense of the word, but from this we cannot conclude that the Book of Daniel is inexact as to this point. Even in our Aryean languages, the word son is not always taken in the strict sense and may signify grandson or descendant. Now, Kuenen does not ignore that this manner of speaking was much more frequently in use in the Semitic languages. The expression "son of Nabuchodonosor" explains itself, therefore, very easily, for it is probable that Baltasar was related by birth to Nabuchodonosor. Besides, it is possible that the name of Nabuchodonosor was here corrupted, and that, through the fault of copyists, it was put instead of that of Nabonahid, which commences, like the preceding, with the name of god Nabo or Nebo, but which was also as unknown as that of Nabuchodonosor was famous. Finally, rigorously speaking, nothing would hinder us from understanding the word son in the sense of successor, just the same as when the Assyrian inscriptions tell us that Jehu was the son of Amri, although Jehu and Amri were not related to one another.

The last historical objection of Kuenen and of Rationalists in general is drawn from what Daniel says about Darius the Mede: "The author reports that after the taking of Babylon, the master of Asia was Darius the Mede, son of Ahasverus, which is in contradiction with the most authentic teachings of profane antiquity and even with other passages of the Old Testament. In vain did they try to support this account of our book by the writing of Xenophon about Cyaxares II.; but this statement cannot serve to the defenders of the historical fact in question, even if the book wherein we find the *Cyropedia*, a real historical romance, would merit a greater confidence. In comparing what the Book of Daniel tells us about Darius the Mede, with the ideas of the author about the succession of the four monarchies, it becomes very doubt-

ful whether king Darius did ever exist." (A. Kuenen, *Kritische Geschichte des A. T.*)

However it may be with regard to Xenophon and his *Cyropædia* from all we have seen until now it goes forth that Daniel was very well instructed about the Babylonian history and, consequently, all the presumptions are in his favor. The silence of the ancient authors about Darius the Mede, after the example of Bal-tasar, as we saw before, proves nothing against his existence. The name of Darius has not yet been recovered in the cuneiform monuments, but Assyrian epigraphy has hardly made its beginning and what has not yet been discovered may be very soon. While awaiting one particular fact merits to be pointed out. A Babylonian tablet bears the following: "Gobrias, his governor and governors in Babylon he established." (*Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, Vol. VII., p. 166.)

This governor exercises a sort of royal power. "I find an indication thereof," says Lenormant, "in the significant fact that on the Babylonian and Chaldean contracts in cuneiform characters, Cyrus is qualified as *King of Babylon, King of the nations* only at the beginning of the third year, counted since the taking of the city; in the contracts of the first and second year, he is merely called king of the nations" (Fr. Lenormant, *La divination chez les Chaldéens*, p. 181). This hypothesis may not, it is true, be firmly founded, but, in every case the objections of infidels are not founded upon any proof at all and, consequently, cannot prevail against the testimony of the Book of Daniel who shows himself so well instructed about everything in regard to the customs and history of Babylon.

III. AUTHENTICITY OF THE VISIONS OF DANIEL.—The prophetic visions of Daniel quite naturally do not find grace before rationalism. If it rejects all kinds of predictions, with much more reason must it reject the predictions of Daniel, which are so precise and so circumstantial. Upon this motive Reuss supports himself when he says: "Not less grave doubts are suggested to us by the very nature of the predictions which form the principal substance of this writing. Behold a prophet who does not limit himself, like all the others, to describe in general outlines the most important events of the world, but who also knows the least details. The others described the future in a picturesque manner, it is true, and their tableaux were quite highly colored; but they content

themselves in crushing the enemies of their nation in a summary manner, and what is more, all the striking victories of right, virtue, and truth, whose perspective they presented to their readers, were announced for the next day, or at least there was not, in their previsions, something to fill up any interval between the present moment and the desired end. Here is something different. The perspective of Daniel extends itself to centuries, and his regard, plunging into a future hidden to all other mortals, is so much more sure and more penetrating, as it refers to the most remote events. For not only does he know the whole series of the Seleucid and Lagid kings, their wars and marriages, but he also knows the number of days the profanation of the altar of Jerusalem and the cessation of its worship will last" (Dan. viii. 14; xii. 11).

We cannot appreciate the value of the reasoning of infidel criticism. Why should God have been obliged to reveal the future to all the prophets in the same manner? If prophecy were a natural faculty of some select intelligences, we could understand that it was subject to certain psychological laws, but since it is a supernatural revelation, an effect of God's free will, who, therefore, can hinder the Master of the future to manifest Himself to His prophets as He pleases, to the one in a manner more vague and confuse, to the other in a manner more precise and clearer? In reality, all these objections are derived from one single error; from the negation of the supernatural and from the possibility itself of the prophecy.

Besides, infidel criticism exaggerates the clearness and precision of the visions of Daniel, in order to be enabled to combat them more easily. Thus, according to rationalism, the author speaks of all the kings of Persia known to him, and he expresses himself with such a precision that we can affirm that he knows only four of them; we are also sure that he makes of Xerxes a contemporary of Alexander the Great. Rationalists do not wish to admit that the prophet could pass under silence a single one of the Persian kings, if he knew them. But in fact, what should have obliged him to speak of them, when he had nothing to tell about them? The errors with which they reproach him are imaginary and are derived from false suppositions.

The principal reason they give, since Porphyry, to place the composition of the Book of Daniel in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, is that "in all the five tableaux (or visions) the historic

frame is the same, and the perspective stops all over at the same point. For a sound and unprejudiced exegesis there cannot, therefore, be the least doubt in regard to the the Messianic hopes of the author. Immediately after King Antiochus Epiphanes, according to him, the empire of the Saints,—the kingdom of God,—must be gloriously established and forever." (Ed. Reuss, *Daniel*.)

This interpretation of the prophecies of Daniel is completely false. He points out, on the contrary, that the coming and death of the Messiah will take place only after seventy year-weeks, beginning with the edict to restore the walls of Jerusalem, that is, a long time after him and after Antiochus Epiphanes. Moreover, far from stopping his predictions in the Macedonian period, he announces the triumph of the Roman Empire over the kingdoms founded by the successors of Alexander. God reveals to him, indeed, in his visions that four great monarchies shall dominate in turn over the Jews and over the world known to the Hebrews: that of the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks or Macedonians, and Romans. Rationalists intercalate against all reason a Medic monarchy between the empire of the Chaldeans and that of the Persians. They find in this intercalation the double advantage to suppress the prophecy in regard to the Roman empire and to attribute an historical error to the author of the visions of which, however, they alone are guilty, for there has never been a Medic monarchy and Daniel did never foretell any. They have been witty! Whole antiquity has seen, and with right, in the beast with ten horns visions of the prophet, Rome and its power. Reuss cannot deny this. "This interpretation," he says, "is very ancient; it serves as basis to the Apocalypse of the New Testament. We can understand that the Jews, when they sighed under the iron rod of the Cæsars and of their prefects, would soon forget the tyranny of the Greeks from whom they had so gloriously delivered themselves, and that, clinging with an increased energy to Messianic hopes, to which the reality corresponded in no manner, a new generation recognized in the apocalyptic pictures of the Book of Daniel the image of its situation. The Christians, as we may easily understand, familiarized themselves with this same interpretation, during the secular persecutions to which they have been exposed under the domination of this same power. The theory of the four monarchies, understood thus, remained official as long as the dogma of inspiration contin-

ued to exist without contestation and whilst it seemed impossible to admit that a prophet could be deceived in his predictions."

This language is an avowal that the prophecy of Daniel may at least be becoming to the Roman Empire. And in fact the pictures of the visions apply to Rome, and to Rome alone, in the most striking manner: *And the fourth kingdom shall be as iron. As iron breaketh into pieces, and subdueth all things, so shall that break and destroy all these* (Dan. ii. 40). This kingdom is prefigured by an animal which the prophet describes thus: *After this I beheld in the vision of the night, and lo, a fourth beast, terrible and wonderful, and exceeding strong, it had great iron teeth, eating and breaking in pieces, and treading down the rest, with its feet; and it was unlike to the other beasts which I had seen before it, and had ten horns. . . . The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be greater than all the kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces* (Dan. vii. 7, 23). Whatever Rationalists may say, these traits are not becoming to the kingdom of the Seleucides and to other Greco-Macedonian kingdoms which never formed a compact monarchy and, on the contrary, were always at war among one another, whilst they depict perfectly the Roman Empire.

How, besides, could the Book of Daniel have been written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, because, without speaking of Ezechiel who praises the wisdom and piety of the prophet (Ezech. xiv. 14, 20; xxviii. 3), Esdras and the Levites of his time, remember its prayers (I. Esd. ix; II. Esd. ix; Dan. ix), and Mathathias, the father of Judas the Machabee, speaks of the Book of Daniel as a book then known by all? (I. Mach. ii. 59-60.)

The language of the Book of Daniel is another proof of its authenticity. The historical section is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic; it is the same with the visions (Hebrew i; viii-xii; Aramaic ii-vii). This mixture of two languages explains itself only in a time of transition, that is, when the Jewish people still understood the Hebrew and commenced to speak the Aramaic or Chaldaic, which becomes perfectly to the time of the Captivity. In the time of the Machabees, the Hebrew had ceased for a long time to be the language spoken,—already in the time of Nehemias, many understood no longer the Hebrew

(II. Esd. xiii. 24), and consequently, a work which aspired to be popular should not be, even partially, written in this language. This reason is so evident that, to escape the force of its argument, Rosenmüller has found nothing better than to imagine that the author had employed two dialects "in order to persuade his readers that his book was composed by the old prophet (Daniel) who was familiar with both languages." To accuse the author of fraud, to treat him as a falsifier! Behold to what must come those who reject the authenticity of the writings of the fourth great prophet! They avow that it is "one of the most remarkable monuments of ancient Hebrew literature," they assure us that "the end of the publication was a noble one and worthy of all praise;" they confess that the author "was an extraordinary man;" and all these praises end in lowering him to the rank of a vulgar liar, solely in order not to admit supernatural revelation!

But it is not less true that the author speaks and writes as they could do only in the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Besides the proof drawn from the mixture of the Hebrew and Chaldaic, we can bring forward another philological reason. The Aramaic or Chaldaic of the Book of Daniel differs from the later Chaldaic, such as we find it in the Targums; it is that which was spoken in Chaldea in the time of Nabuchodonosor. The learned Michaelis remarks as follows: "Daniel and Esdras always employ the Hebraic verbal form called *hophal*, instead of the Aramaic form called *itthaphal*. The conjugation named *aphel*, which must take regularly as preformative the letter *aleph*, frequently commences in Daniel and in Esdras by a *he*, in imitation of the Hebrew *hiphil*, etc." These are so many indications of a period of transition; they authorize to conclude that the Book of Daniel was written in a time when they still mingled both languages, because the habit of speaking Aramaic had not yet been completely adopted.

Finally, a last trait which shows the authenticity of the visions of Daniel, are the images of which the prophet makes use; they have nothing Greek; on the contrary, they offer a very characteristic Babylonian color: colossal statue, lions with wings of eagles, leopards with four wings, ram with two horns, he-goat with four horns, head with ten horns. It is sufficient of having entered an archæological Museum or having seen the collections of Assyro-Chaldaic antiquities and the reproductions of Greek antiquities to

recognize right away in these traits the art of the shores of the Euphrates and Tigris, and not the Hellenic art. The writer to whom these images were familiar lived, therefore, in the time of the Chaldaic domination.

CHAPTER VI

AUTHENTICITY OF THE DEUTEROCANONICAL PARTS OF THE BOOK OF DANIEL

I. THE CANTICLE OF THE THREE CHILDREN IN THE FIERY FURNACE.—When the companions of Daniel had been thrown into the fiery furnace, because they had refused to adore the golden idol of Nabuchodonosor, Azarias addressed to God a prayer in order to implore His mercy, and then, with his two companions, he thanked the Lord by a hymn of thanksgiving. This prayer and hymn are not found in the Hebrew Bible, but we read them only in the Greek version and in our Vulgate (Dan. iii. 24-90). Protestants reject both as apocryphal and infidels regard all the deuterocanonical parts of the Book of Daniel as fictions. "As to the legendary additions which the Greek version has joined to the book of Daniel," says Kuenen, . . . "these additions are not founded upon any tradition and are chiefly the invention of the translator or of some other person." We shall establish that the contested passages are authentic.

The Greek translator has joined these fragments, particularly the prayer and the canticle of the young men in the furnace, to the account of Daniel, because he found them in the original. The first proof we give for this is, that the prayer of Azarias and the canticle were originally written in Hebrew or in Aramaic. Although most Protestants deny this, the fact is nevertheless so certain that several admit it, such as Bertholdt and Franz Delitzsch. The existence of the two Greek versions we have thereof, that of the Septuagint and that of Theodotion, can be explained only through the existence of one Semitic original. Even in the translations, the idioms can be easily recognized. Michaelis, in his *Oriental Library*, has pointed out a certain number of them, so also Welte in his *Special Introduction to the Deuterocanonical*

Books. The wind therein, for instance, is called "spirit," *pneuma*, because the word *rouah* has the double meaning of spirit and wind in the original. In the enumeration of material beings that are invited to praise God, the cold and the dew are named twice (iii. 64, 69). The reason for this repetition can be only, as Bertholdt has remarked, the translation, from one and the same word, of two expressions different from the original, for the manner in which the canticle is composed excludes the double mention of one and the same thing. The Babylonians are designated under the name of apostates; this qualification is improper, for we can apply this only to those who have abandoned the true religion; now the inhabitants of Babylon never adored the true God. But the use of this Greek expression is easily understood, if we suppose a Semitic term in a multiple sense, such as *mordim*, signifying at once rebel, apostate, enemy, stubborn. We cannot draw, therefore, from the language in which the prayer and canticle were written any objection against their authenticity.

To these philological reasons, we can add that in the *Codex chisianus* the deutero-canonical part of the third chapter of Daniel is marked with critical signs by which Origen, in his Hexapla, noted the differences between the Semitic original and the Greek translations, which proves that he had this original before him.

Neither can the content of the canticle be alleged to establish its apocryphal character, whatever Rationalists may claim. Bertholdt, quite in admitting the Semitic origin, says: "In the hymn all is defective. Not one word is becoming to those in whose mouth it is placed. Only at the conclusion there are some expressions that are becoming to the situation, and even these are very awkward. The prayer of Azarias is more appropriate to the circumstances, and nevertheless it is defective here and there." According to Eichorn, we ought to hear the "sighs" of the companions of Daniel, "under the stroke of a mortal agony." On the contrary, "they pray all three as if they had prepared themselves and learned by heart before hand a prayer to thank God for such an unexpected deliverance." Even this reflection of the German critic proves that the canticle is not so "defective" as Bertholdt claims. In fact, the three young men, filled with gratitude, being unable to doubt the divine protection and their miraculous deliverance, break out into acts of thanksgiving, but in such a simple and nat-

ural manner that their language required no anterior preparation. Spared by the most frightful of elements, fire, they invite all the elements and all the creatures in general to give thanks to the Lord, in a hymn without art and without preparation, which requires no labor of composition, because it is a simple enumeration of all the things created, in the same order as the first chapter of Genesis gives them. What could be more appropriate to the situation? In truth, their canticle has not the elevation, the variety and poetic richness of the Psalms of David, but it could not have these qualities, having been extemporized under such circumstances.

The Church, therefore, was right in considering these parts of chapter iii. of Daniel as authentic, and as an integral part of the text of the prophet. If we suppress them, the break is sensible and there is no longer any connection between what precedes and follows. "We have to admit," says Reuss, "that the account continues here (if we cut off the prayer and the canticle) in quite an abrupt manner." Moreover, the sequel of the account states expressly that Nabuchodonosor sees in the furnace *four men loose, and walking in the midst of the fire, and there is no hurt in them, and the form of the fourth is like the son of a god* (Dan. iii. 92). Now the Chaldean part of the narrative speaks only of three companions of Daniel; the presence of the fourth personage is explained only in the Greek text, where we see that *an angel of the Lord went down . . . into the furnace; and he drove the flame of the fire out of the furnace . . . and the fire touched them not*" (iii. 49-50). The Chaldean text itself supposes, therefore, an original and lost fragment whose version has been preserved to us in the Greek text. What can they ask more to establish the authenticity of the latter?

II. THE HISTORY OF SUSANNA.—Rationalistic criticism admits neither the authenticity nor the veracity of the history of Susanna. Reuss, in his introduction, ranks it among the series of "Moral Stories," and as to its subject expresses himself thus: "We have here a moral story, a purely fictitious account written with a pedagogical end in view, and not a real and authentic history; this is for us without question. . . . We draw the principal argument in favor of our manner of seeing from the narrative itself. The sketch thereof is quite poor; the improbabilities are staring us

in the face and we meet with them almost in every line. . . . We do not succeed in finding out the social position of the husband of Susanna. . . . But the end of the story especially is brought out in the most singular manner. . . . The legend is undoubtedly of Hellenistic origin. This goes forth especially from the fact that the story ends at a point of a quite doubtful taste, with a play of words that cannot be conceived in a translation."

Since Porphyry, the play of words used by Daniel, in regard to the execution that awaits the aged calumniators of Susanna, is the principal objection which they make against the authenticity of this history. It cannot be denied, however, that the Greek text, in which we have the history of Susanna, is a translation from a Semitic original. We have, indeed, two different Greek versions, that of Theodotion, which has been adopted by the Church, and that of the Septuagint. Moreover, in these two versions, the Hebraisms are abounding. The conjunction *and*, continually repeated, makes us recognize therein one of the most characteristic traits of Hebrew style. The formula "as yesterday and the day before," meaning "as usually," has certainly nothing Greek, etc. We can say, it is true, that we find similar Hebraisms in the writings composed in Greek by the Hellenist Jews, but we cannot explain them thus in the present case, for the Alexandrine version contains many less than that of Theodotion, because the translator tried to write in pure Greek, and this difference between the two texts is a proof of the existence of the Semitic original. It is admitted by everybody, that the version of the Septuagint is not an edition corrected from that of Theodotion; the latter is even posterior to the former by its date.

But how can we explain a purely Greek play of words with a Semitic original? It may be possible that the play of words did not exist at all in the primitive text; but if it did exist, which is more probable, we may suppose, as Origen did, answering to this difficulty that had been proposed to him by Julius Africanus, that the Semitic author had made use of names of different trees, which lent themselves to a paronomasy in Chaldaic or in Hebrew, and that the Greek translator substituted to these names those of other trees which permitted him to preserve the play of words. This explanation appears to be the most probable. "The fashion of making allusions," says Moulinié, "was so

general in the East, that we even find it in the New Testament, for instance, in the words which Jesus Christ said to Peter: *Thou art Peter, [rock] and upon this rock I shall build my Church.* However Jesus Christ did not speak in Greek, but in Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic (Matt. xvi. 18). What therefore happened? That the Evangelists have rendered in Greek the allusion which also favors the Syriac, where *Cephas* signifies a rock, *Keipha*. Hence it may have been the same with the allusions of Daniel, that the translator Theodotion found the means to render them in Greek without altering the spirit of the words of the original."

Reuss tells us that this "play of words cannot be conceived in a translation." How, then, does it come that he made one in his own translation, little successful indeed, but very real? Daniel said to the first old man: *Now, then, if thou hast seen this woman, tell me under what tree thou sawest her.* He answered: Under a wild quince tree (cognassier). Then Daniel said: *Well hast thou lied against thy own head! For behold the angel arriving with the sentence from God who will knock thee (cogner) so as to cleave thee in two.* Then having put him aside, he commanded that the other should come, and he said to him: *Oh, thou seed of Chanaan, and not of Juda, beauty has deceived thee, and lust has perverted thy heart. . . . Now, tell me under what tree didst thou take them conversing together?* He answered: Under a holly tree (houx). And Daniel said to him: *Well hast thou also lied against thy own head! The angel of God will beat thee (houssiner); he is waiting already for thee, with sword in hand, in order to cut thee in two, to exterminate thee.*

If Reuss could make a play with French words on the Greek, why should the Greek translator not have been permitted to do the same on the Hebrew?

The other objections of infidels against the authenticity of the history of Susanna hardly merit to be mentioned. Susanna was not judged, they say, according to the law.

Certainly the judges that condemned her were unjust, but the proceedings which they followed were exteriorly regular and conformable to the Jewish customs, which the captives were permitted to follow in Chaldea.

How, they add, could the people consent so easily to re-open the case, at the request of a young man? Because this young man was

undoubtedly already known for his precocious wisdom, and, in every case, because he belonged to one of the first Jewish families and lived at the court of the king of Babylon, which gave him an authority above his age.

"We do not succeed in finding out the social position of the husband of Susanna," says Reuss. And why should we be obliged to know this? The sacred historian has taught us only what was necessary for us to understand his account; he makes known to us that Susanna was the wife of an important personage among the Jews, and this is sufficient for him and is sufficient for us.

III. THE HISTORY OF BEL AND OF THE DRAGON.—The history of Bel and that of the Dragon which end the Book of Daniel in our Vulgate are also treated as stories by Rationalists. Behold what Reuss writes: "That they are stories, and nothing else, this cannot be questioned. It is true there existed formerly at Babylon a temple of the god Bel, which was destroyed by a Persian king, but this is the sole historical element which we can recognize in these pages. All the rest is pure invention and betrays for the writer small talent. Never did the Babylonians adore living animals. The lions' den is quite simply a borrowing made from the Hebrew Daniel, and the author, in order to get up something new, knows only to improve his model. The story of Bel and of the Serpent is positively of Hellenistic origin and has never existed in Hebrew. We do not hesitate to assign to it as its native country, Egypt, whose indigenous worship might have suggested to the author the idea of a living animal nourished and adored as a deity."

The objections in the above passage may be reduced to three: (1) The author attributes to Daniel the destruction of the temple of Bel at Babylon, but this temple was destroyed only a long time afterwards, by Xerxes, as is attested by Herodotus, Strabo, and Arrien. (2) The Babylonians did not render worship to the serpent. (3) This legend is an imitation of the first account of the condemnation of Daniel to the lions' den. They added formerly a fourth objection, drawn from the fact that Cyrus is represented to us as an adorer of idols; manifest error, they said, for this prince, in his quality as Persian, was a monotheist and abhorred the idols. To-day this objection against our sacred account has become, on the contrary, a proof in favor of its veracity, because, as we have seen in the fore-

going chapter, the epigraphic monuments of Cyrus himself testify that he adored the Babylonian gods.

As to the destruction of the temple of Bel by Daniel, the text of the Septuagint does not speak thereof; it mentions only the destruction of the idol of Bel; but the version of Theodotion, after which our Vulgate has been translated, indicates it expressly and we have no motive to question it. Nothing hindered the Babylonians to rebuild what had been destroyed by the prophet. Herodotus, after the time of Xerxes, beheld with his own eyes the temple of Bel, although this king had overthrown it, according to the testimony of Strabo and Arrien. What can we conclude from this? That they had rebuilt it. We have to remark, besides, that Daniel might not have demolished the entire temple. The detailed description of Herodotus allows us to give an account of what happened. According to the description of the historian of Halicarnassus, the sacred building, *hieron*, raised in honor of the great god of Babylon, consisted principally in a pyramid of stories on top of which was a small sanctuary (*neos*) wherein was placed a bed and a golden table; in the first story of the pyramid there was another sanctuary (*neos*), in which they honored the golden statue of Bel; near by was found a large golden table (*Herodotus* i. 181, 183). Upon this table they placed the meats offered to the god. All these details, given by Herodotus, are in perfect agreement with what we read in the appendix of the Book of Daniel. It is evident that the sacred author speaks of the lower sanctuary. It was this that must have been destroyed by the prophet and which was rebuilt later on.

By the second objection it is maintained that the Chaldeans did not render worship to living animals. This objection is unfounded. They made use of serpents to render oracles. Jeremiah makes allusion to this custom in his Letter (Bar. vi. 19), and Fr. Lenormant says, in regard to this subject: "The phrase in question seems to refer to the circumstance that, in some of the temples of Babylon, they would have raised serpents to serve as interpreters of the gods and to render oracles" (*Opus cit.*, p. 90). Also Schrader, a Rationalist, says: "It is quite wrong to deny in our time that the worship of the serpent had been in vogue among the Chaldeans" (Riehm's *Wörterbuch des Biblischen Altertums*, vol. 1., p. 288).

Hereby can be seen the falsity of the opinion of Rationalists, who, from the fact that the Babylonians did not render any worship to animals, whilst the Egyptians adored them, conclude that the history of Bel and of the Dragon was written in Egypt by a Hellenist Jew. Since the serpent was venerated in Babylon, it follows that the opinion which makes thereof a writing of Egyptian origin has no foundation whatever. Moreover, it is contradicted by the original language of the piece. This piece, indeed, was primitively written in Semitic, and not in Greek, for the version of Theodotion, posterior to that of the Septuagint, differs from the latter on several points and in particular by numerous Hebraisms, which attest to the efforts of the translator to reproduce more exactly than his predecessors the original text.

There remains a third objection, according to which Daniel is thrown into the lions' den only in imitation of what is related in the first part of the book of this prophet. The author, short of invention, reproduces simply what he read elsewhere. These are pure affirmations. Rationalists cannot deny, according to what we have already seen, that the execution by lions was a Babylonian execution. If M. Reuss tells us: "The lions' den is simply a borrowing made from the Hebrew Daniel," he knows absolutely nothing about it; he gives no proof for his assertion, and cannot give any; he supposes something proved that he ought to prove. Besides, how can we be astonished that the prophet was condemned a second time to an execution in use at Babylon? Each country has its own kind of execution, and naturally those condemned to death were always executed according to the custom of the country.

There is, moreover, a detail which could not have been imitated from the first part of Daniel, because it is not mentioned therein, and which is perfectly Babylonian. It is the offering of nourishment to idols. In fact, we read in an inscription of Nabuchodonosor: *I offered sacrifices with devotion to Marduk. . . . Every day a large and fat ox, with its breast and excellent sides, was the part of the gods. Fish, fowl . . . treasure of the ponds, honey, milk, excellent oil, honeyed wine, sikar (fermented liquor) . . . were placed by me on the table (pasur) of Marduk and of Zarbanit, our masters. (Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia.)*

CHAPTER VII

THE MINOR PROPHETS: OSEE, JONAS, AND ZACHARIAS

THE Minor Prophets are so called on account of the brevity of their writings. Some of them have left us so little, that they do not furnish material for any objection on the part of infidels. Consequently, we do not need to occupy ourselves with them, but only with those against whom rationalistic criticism raises difficulties, that is: Osee, Jonas, and Zacharias.

I. OSEE.—The authenticity of the Book of Osee is generally admitted by criticism. "The authenticity of chapters iv. to xiv., in their whole, and such as we possess them to-day," says Kuenen, "is unquestionable. We have to say the same of chapters i. to iii., whose form alone is different, and of which certain details attest that they must have been written at a time anterior to the life of the prophet. In the main, these chapters develop the same thought as chapters iv. to xiv. The entire book is, therefore, perfectly authentic."

The only objection which they can raise against the Book of Osee is made in the name of morals. God commands the prophet to take for wife a woman of bad life, and to have children with her, whose symbolic names will be as a living prediction of what shall happen to the people of Israel. Osee obeys, he takes Gomer, daughter of Diblaim, and he has three children with her, called Jezrahel, "God disperses," *Ló-Ruhama*, "to whom grace was not given," and *Ló-Ammi*, "which is not my people," to indicate the kind of chastisement which the kingdom of Israel will draw upon itself for its infidelity and idolatry (Osee i.-ii.). Later, God again commands His prophet to take another woman, guilty of adultery, but she must give up her disorders, and Osee has no relation with her as long as she is not converted, to point out that God will have no pity on His people, as long as Israel will be unfaithful to Him.

Various interpreters, to justify Osee of the reproach of immorality, have believed, like Hengstenberg, that all that the sacred writer relates in regard to this subject took place in ecstasy or in a dream; others, like Kuenen, to attenuate the force of the

prophecy, see therein only a fiction or an allegory. However, the most of the ancient and modern interpreters believe that the facts related by Osee are real and true. The Fathers have perfectly explained them a long time since. "The Lord, master of the universe," says Theodoret of Cyrus, who sums up the teaching of the Greek Fathers, "makes the blessed Osee marry a woman of bad life (Gomer), to thus reproach His people with their impiety, and thereby to show to them the greatness of His patience and mercy. . . . The prophet is not soiled by this marriage. . . . Osee takes this woman for wife in order to obey, not a guilty passion, but the orders of God, and this marriage is chaste and praise-worthy" (*In Osee*, i. 4). The daughter of Diblaim leads henceforth an irreproachable life.

As to the second woman which Osee takes, this marriage cannot give rise to any objection, according to the precise teachings which the text is careful to give to us, as we have seen, to explain under what conditions it had been contracted. Was she divorced, or was her first husband dead? Was the daughter of Diblaim also dead, or was she still living? We do not know, but be this as it may, because bigamy and divorce were permitted to the Jews.

II. JONAS.—The Book of Jonas is one of those that have occupied the rationalistic critics the most. Since the end of the last century, they have sought to eliminate from it the supernatural facts. With this view, they have tried first to explain them in a natural manner. Reuss has summed up these explanations in the following terms: "The most adventurous and the most absurd interpretations replaced the biblical account. Now the scenes on the vessel and of the fish (which swallowed Jonas) were looked upon as a dream of the prophet; now Jonas, thrown into the sea, had the chance to save himself on the corpse of a whale. Elsewhere, the latter transformed itself into a vessel of this name which happened to pass; or this whole part of the story was only an image of the hesitations, of the want of courage, of the torments of conscience of the stubborn missionary. Others alleged to recognize therein a foreign myth, retouched and rehandled; for example, that of Andromedes, tied to a rock near Joppe and delivered to a marine monster; or that of Hesion, delivered in a similar crisis by Hercules, who on this occasion entered the mouth of a beast; or finally that of the fish Oannes, who, according to Babylonian mythology, taught the people the

arts and sciences. It can be easily seen there is not the least resemblance between all these Greek or Oriental fables and the foundation of our book, in which the fish is only an accessory element." (Ed. Reuss, *La Bible, Philosophie Religieuse*, p. 565.)

All these naturalistic or allegorical explanations are to-day universally abandoned as indefensible, but in return negative criticism has pushed its attacks much further. The defenders of the system, of which we have given a summary, admitted the historical character of the facts related in Jonas, although they mostly denied their supernatural character. The contemporary freethinkers see a pure fiction in the account; Reuss has excluded it from the collection of the prophets, and has ranked it in a collection of "moral pieces."

The reason why the history of Jonas is treated thus is, in reality, because it contains too great a number of miracles. However, the infidels do not dare to condemn this writing solely on account of the prodigies it relates; they seek, therefore, to justify the sentence which they carry against it, by different reasons which we have to expose and discuss. They are summed up by Kuenen as follows: "Nothing, *a priori*, can inspire us with confidence in the credibility of the Book of Jonas. By examining it more closely, we will soon discover how indefensible is the hypothesis according to which we would have to do here with a historical writing. Behold the principal objections: First, it is imagined that all the inhabitants of Ninive became converted to Jehovah after having listened for one day to the preaching of an Israelitic prophet. Let us admit that he spoke their language, how could he have obtained this great authority over a people that was a stranger to the worship of Jehovah. If really the Ninivites were converted, would he not have been careful to instruct them more fully about the new worship?" (*Opus cit.*, p. 504.)

These objections are weak. They suppose from the part of their authors a complete ignorance of the state of religion at Ninive. The Assyrians were profoundly religious, as their inscriptions and books clearly prove. They had their national gods, but they believed that other nations also had their deities, real and powerful divinities, although undoubtedly of an inferior order. They were, moreover, very credulous and even superstitious, as is attested by the numerous magical writings discovered in the royal library of Assurbanipal. They were, therefore, inclined to believe

in the prophets and oracles of even a foreign God. The thought of contesting the divinity of Jehovah, His power and knowledge of the future, did not even enter their minds, for they had no doubt about this.

Consequently, the preaching of Jonas at Ninive is not so extraordinary as they imagine and maintain. The prophet preached there, not only one day, but three days (Jonas iii. 3). His quality of foreigner, announcing great misfortunes in the name of a foreign God, must have attracted their attention so much more. The text states formally that the King of Assyria believed in his word (iii. 6), and that it was by the order of this prince that the whole city did penance. The power of the king was so absolute that his order is sufficient for us to explain all that the Ninivites did. They fasted *and God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil ways; and God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had said that he would do to them, and he did it not* (iii. 10). The sacred writer tells nowhere that they became Jews and that they adopted the Jewish religion; the language of which he made use supposes even the contrary; he says only that they did penance for their crimes. The prophet had, therefore, no design "to instruct them more fully about their new worship," because he had not for them any new worship to adopt.

Kuenen continues: "Let us notice the general tone of the account; of the principal personage, we learn only the name; as to the 'King of Ninive' (iii. 6, etc.), we know neither his name nor in what time he reigned; neither are we told anything about the final lot of the city; according to iii. 10, *God had mercy with regard to the evil which he had said that he would do to them, and he did it not*; finally, we leave Jonas sitting outside of Ninive. Did he return into his country, did he learn to bless God's mercy towards the Ninivites? Absolute silence on all these questions."

It is really surprising that one can make similar objections. But why should Jonas be obliged to relate to us his history quite at length? No prophet did this. Also we do not need to know the name of the King of Ninive. It was probably Binnirar, whom they also called Rammannirar. In every case we know for certain the approximate date of his reign, because we know from the Books of Kings that the prophet Jonas lived under Jeroboam II., King of Israel (824-809). Kuenen himself says: "Jonas, son of

Amittai, is without contradiction a historic personage; it was he that foretold Jeroboam II. the re-establishment of the ancient limits of his kingdom. Consequently, he must have exercised his ministry under the reign of this king, and in the kingdom of the ten tribes, where Gath-Hepher, his native city, was situated" (IV. Ki. xiv. 25) (*Opus cit.*). Certainly, the Book of Jonas does not tell us the name of the King of Ninive, but the reason is because he did not see the necessity for doing this. The same silence is kept, and for the same reason, on the final conduct of the Ninivites and on the life of the prophet after his preaching. The author, in spite of all the contrary affirmations of infidelity, wished to write a historical book, but in writing it he had in view a useful and edifying end, and he composed a work "within the frame of which should enter, consequently, only the particularities that might serve his end." It is Kuenen himself who expresses himself thus.

Aside from the facts which are contested as we saw, the critics also find something to tell on the canticle of Jonas. Behold the reproaches which Kuenen addresses to him: "Finally, the acts of thanksgiving which, according to ii. 3-10, Jonas should have pronounced, in the belly of the fish, correspond very poorly to the situation of the prophet. Delivered from a great danger, the author shows his gratitude to Jehovah, and manifests to Him the desire to make offerings to Him and to fulfill vows. How little the idea may be we can form about the situation of Jonas, one thing is clear, that it was not exactly of a nature to inspire him with great gratitude. Let us remember also that this canticle of praise, which would be from the year 820 B. C., has not the least antique color; moreover, all the allusions to the temple and to the worship celebrated in the temple (ii. 5, 8, 10) do not permit us to believe that it was composed by an Ephraimite prophet."

As if the Ephraimite prophets did not render worship to God in the only place where it was legitimate to do so! This reasoning is as false as that according to which Jonas, preserved alive by the most wonderful of prodigies, in the belly of a fish, should not have had any motive to be thankful towards God who thus protected him. And who then could ever have had more just motives to thank God? The canticle of Jonas corresponds so well to his situation that, even by the avowal of Kuenen, certain critics have believed that this poem had been the germ from which

the whole book went forth. "Bunsen," says the professor of Leyden, "considers it . . . as a chant composed by Jonas after he had been saved from shipwreck; the legend should have enlarged this event until it gave to it the form it has kept in our book." Besides, to justify the canticle of Jonas and show that it is worthy of a prophet, it is sufficient to read it. (cf. ii. 3-10.)

III. ZACHARIAS.—The authenticity of the last six chapters of Zacharias is generally rejected by rationalistic criticism. Kuenen sums up the judgment thus: "The Book of Zacharias is composed of fourteen chapters which, during several centuries, were always attributed to one and the same author, that is, to Zacharias, son of Barachias. . . . The authenticity of the first eight chapters raises no doubt: the titles and chronological accounts, the form and contents of the prophecies, all concur to show this. On the contrary, the chapters ix.-xi., and xii.-xiv., provided with particular titles and without the author's name, visibly distinguish themselves from the first eight and refer to quite other historical circumstances. The attention once drawn to this fact, the opinion became general, more and more, that the chapters ix.-xi. and xii.-xiv. are not derived from Zacharias, but from two more ancient prophets who must have lived before the exile. . . . Chapter ix. dates from the reign of Hozias and Jeroboam II., probably from the year 780 B. C.; chapter xi. 4-17 must have been written shortly before the Syro-Ephraimite War, about 743 B. C.; chapters x. and xi. 1-3 suppose that the inhabitants of northeast Palestine had already been lead away captive by Tiglath-Pileser, 740 B. C. Thus we stop between the years 780 and 740 B. C. The author of Zacharias, ix.-xi., would, therefore, have been, according to our opinion, a contemporary of Amos, Osee, and Esias. . . . The prophecies (xii.-xiv.) . . . must have been written between the years 719 and 586 B. C. Certain traits . . . explain themselves quite well in the supposition that the author wrote about the end of the reign of Sedecias." (*Opus cit.*, vol. ii., pp. 459-79.)

Such are the results to which negative criticism arrives. Its adherents are not agreed, this goes without saying, as to fixing the dates of the contested prophecies. Thus several, contrary to the opinion above stated, place them a long time after the Babylonian Captivity, some under Alexander the Great, others under the

Machabees. In what they are agreed is that they refuse them to Zacharias. What are, therefore, the proofs upon which they support themselves? They draw them from the historical allusions which they believe to discover therein. Speaking of the prophecies of chapters ix. to xi., Kuenen reasons thus:—

“The historical situation which they suppose can be clearly seen. The kingdom of the ten tribes is still erect (Zach. ix. 10, 13; x. 6, 7, 10; xi. 14). The prophecy about Damascus, etc., (ix. 1-7), has no meaning, except it was pronounced in a time when the peoples quoted in these verses had not yet, in losing their national existence, undergone the punishment for the evil they had done to Israel and Juda; according to chapter x. 2, idolatry still exists; chapter x. 10-11 refers to the time when Assyria and Egypt yet disputed the supremacy. In these passages, the four prophecies suppose, in general, the same historical situation, and if they refer to different dates, these dates are not so remote from one another that they cannot all fall within the same space of time which embraces the life of one and the same man.”

Reuss, in his turn, says, in regard to chapter xi.: “It is impossible, in face of this text, not to recognize that the kingdom of Ephraim still existed under its kings, but that it was torn by civil war and anarchy, so that the prophet, contrary to the habit of all his colleagues, who keep in view a better future, even among the saddest and most discouraging circumstances, enters into mourning beforehand about all the beautiful things which he had promised in his first discourses, and renounces explicitly the idea of a reconciliation between Juda and Ephraim, the latter being irrevocably vowed to death.” (*Die Propheten*, vol. i., p. 182.)

What is strange in these appreciations of infidels, is that they reject the authenticity of these chapters, because they contain predictions against Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, and the cities of the Philistines, which were known to the Hebrews after the captivity as well as before, whilst they place the most of the chapters where there is question of the Greeks, before the conquests of Alexander, although the mention of the Greeks ought to hinder them to admit, according to their principles, that these prophecies were anterior to the war of the Macedonians against Persia.

“We must be astonished,” says Burger, “because the modern critics, who have so much sagacity and penetration to find traces of

the exile in the most of the other books of the Old Testament,—for example, in almost all the Psalms,—had not enough intelligence to discover the numerous allusions to the times of exile, which we find in all the chapters of the second part of Zacharias, for instance, in chapter ix. 13, the deliverance of the prisoners and the mention of the Greeks; in chapter x. almost entirely.” (J. D. F. Burger, *Etudes Exegetiques et Critiques sur le Prophet Zacharias*, p. 125.)

They claim that God's people had a king at the time when the prophet wrote (ix. 10), and that the latter, consequently, lived before the Babylonian Captivity, when the kingdom of Israel still existed (ix. 13), and when Assyria was still a great power (x. 10). But all these affirmations are false. Israel is represented to us erring without a shepherd, that is, without a king (x. 2). “A small portion of those that had been carried away returned to Jerusalem and into the cities of Juda, but the daughter of Sion has yet other captives that await deliverance (ix. 11–12), namely, Ephraim dispersed among the nations (x. 6). The captivity, that is, the destruction of the national existence, had, therefore, already taken place for both kingdoms, and if there is question of their union (ix. 10, 13; x. 6), there is question of the union to come that will take place when the captivity, which still lasts, shall have an end. As to Assyria and Egypt, the two principal powers with which Israel, before the exile, was constantly in relation, are mentioned here only as representing the whole of the nations, among whom Israel has commenced and does not cease since to be dispersed.” (J. Walther, *Commentaire sur le Livre du Prophète Zacharie*, p. 6.)

Rationalistic critics do not fail to allege against the authenticity of the last chapters of Zacharias that the style thereof is quite different from that of the first. We had already repeatedly occasion to remark how easy it is to abuse this criterion and with what discretion and reserve we must make use thereof. The present case furnishes a memorable example of the correctness of this observation. Rosenmüller tells us that the first eight chapters are “prosaic, weak, poor,” whilst the six following are “poetic, concise, brilliant,” whence he concludes that they cannot be from the same hand. Boettcher passes just a contrary judgment: “In comparison with the lifeless language of these chapters (the last, ix.–xiv.), the Psalms attributed to the epoch of the Machabees are full of freshness.”

In truth, both judgments are exaggerated. In the first chapters, Zacharias, describing visions, generally expresses himself in prose, whilst he often makes use of poetic language, that is, of parallelism, in his latter prophesies; but if, in his first part, his horizon becomes larger, when he prophesies a remote future, then his style elevates itself as in the last chapters, and he expresses himself in an analogous manner. Moreover, we find similar expressions in both parts of the prophecy; in both the people is designated by the phrase: "the house of Israel and the house of Juda" (viii. 13), or "the house of Juda and the house of Joseph" (x. 6); "Juda, Israel, and Jerusalem" (i. 19); "Juda and Ephraim" (ix. 13); "Juda and Israel" (xi. 14). Providence is called "the eye of God" (iii. 9; iv. 10; ix. 1; xii. 4), in the whole of the book, etc. The language of both parts is, in summary, from a quite pure Hebrew, mixed only with some rare Chaldaics.

But what is more important, the foundation of the thoughts is the same in all the parts of the book. The beginning foretells the chastisement destined for the enemies of the Jews (i. 14, 15; vi. 8); the precise end its enemies shall have and what punishments are reserved to them (ix. 1, and further); in the visions of the first part, the Messiah is prophesied as king and pontiff (iii. 8; vi. 12, and further); it is the same in that of the second (ix. 9-17); both announce the conversion of the Gentiles (ii. 11; vi. 15; viii. 23, etc.; xiv. 16-17), the return of the captive Israelites into their country (viii. 7-8; ix. 11, etc.; x. 8. etc.), the holiness of the new kingdom (iii. 1-11; v. 1-11; xiii. 1-6), a wonderful prosperity (i. 17; iii. 10; viii. 3, etc.; 11-16; xiv. 7-11), fruit of God's particular protection (ii. 9; ix. 8, 12). All over "the angel of Jehovah" fulfills the same rôle (i.; iii.; xii. 6). Can we desire a greater unity of views, and what more is needed to attest the unity of authorship?

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